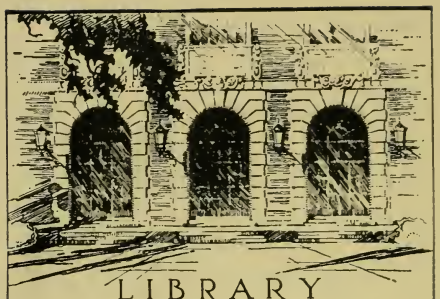

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THE MARTYR OF GLENCREE.

VOL. III.

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THE MARTYR OF GLENCREE.

A ROMANCE TOO TRUE.

By ROBERT SOMERS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE MARTYR OF GLENCREE.

CHAPTER I.

As for you,
Say what you can, my false o'erweighs your true.
Measure for Measure.

MARGARET stayed that night with Martha at the hut. The loss of the ring had caused her increasing anxiety, and as search and reflection alike convinced her that the ring was abstracted from the workbox, and abstracted by Picardy and by no other, she had grieved over the sacred token so dear to Martha, so doubly dear to herself, now that it was gone, and imagined many evil consequences possibly

to arise. It was a little incident in itself, but a bad omen to Margaret of almost spiritual significance. It might be a sally, a mischievous frolic of Picardy, with no intention but to restore what he had taken. She had not yet believed that the drover, who had come and gone so many years about the country, was utterly wicked. Yet she had no confidence in so roystering, reckless, and self-pushing a man of the world; and if he should be a bad-hearted knave, to what bad purposes might he not employ this ring of sacred associations? So she longed to unbosom herself to Martha on this vexing subject.

"What a pity!" said Martha, wringing her hands in disquietude. "The ring was not unprecious in itself, but much more precious as a token, in its own private circle, of Christian truth, love, and fidelity; and ah! Margaret, how still more precious may it

prove to us in another sense, now that it has fallen into wrong hands. Good widow Lachlison, my father, you, me, and more a rogue may entrap by so small a thing. I do fear and hate that man! He is a vile, murdering fellow at heart. And how can it ever be recovered from him?"

"I will recover it or expose the thief," replied Margaret, with a calm decision which closed all further remark on a matter that had disturbed her not a little, but in respect to which she was now obviously more at peace.

She returned to Glenvernoch, and next day Picardy was there expected to take delivery of his cattle. It has been impressed on her mother and on her father, with a firm, but easy and unaffected confidence of spirit, in which Margaret usually prevails, that the drover must not be

allowed to lift cattle or anything else, and that little or no speech or phrase of any kind is to be held with him, till he has first had an interview with her in the parlour.

Picardy on his arrival was shown into the parlour, where Margaret was seated with a seam, and her workbox on the table, much as it all had been on their last meeting. A chair was also set down where he had suddenly advanced his on that occasion.

"Mistress Margaret, your servant," said the Drover, with a show of politeness, but in some perplexity as to what the deuce this could mean.

"Good morning! sit down a moment," returned Margaret with a not ungracious gesture, pointing to the chair close at her side; and Picardy drew himself forward, and sat down.

"Is Glenvernoch no' aboot?" were his first words.

"He has been looking for you a' morning, and I dinna wish to deteen you, Tam," said Margaret. "Give me the ring ye took the other day," lifting her eyes fully upon him.

"Ring! what ring?" replied the drover, with a curiously mingled expression of ignorance and pleasantry, under which he might either hope to carry the matter off in easy triumph, or have time at least to rally his wits a little. "Are ye joking, Margaret? Weel, ha! ha! a joke from you would be rich, ha! ha! But seriously mistress Margaret, did I promise ye a ring? It surely wasna a marriage ring? Gin it were a marriage ring, my bonnie lass, I wad gallop to the toon"—

"I dinna want ony clavers, Tam," said the young woman with a decisive gesture of impatience. "Ye asked to see me the last day ye were here, and I met you where

we are noo. In that workbox was my ring, the only ring ever on my finger, and ye took it, Tam, when I turned my back; nane but you took it. Give it me, as ye may hae intended; give it me this instant."

"Ooter nonsense, mistress Margaret. What has caused ye to think that I took the ring wi' sae mony wild sodger lads aboot the hoose? Gude faith, they'll nap mair than a ring if ye dinna look weel aifter them."

"Ye deny it then, fause ane, and maun bide the consequences," exclaimed Margaret, rising hastily, action in every feature.

"What's the hurry? stay, Margaret, stay," said Picardy in alarm.

"I'll not stay, unless you restore me the stolen ring. Wilt have me think of thee, Mr. Picardy, what is dishonest?"

"Hoo daur ye, Margaret? A daffin o' mine, ha! ha!—mere daffin! Deil the like

o' you in the country-side. Ye hae nae sense o' fun like ither young lasses," putting his hand into an inner pocket. "There's your bonnie ring, Maggie, ye mak' sic a fuffaloo aboot? What will ye gie me noo in fair exchange?"

The voice of Glenvernoch was heard sounding through the long passage. "Whar's Tam? Whar's the dealer? His beasts eatin' their heads aff!" Picardy suddenly dropped the ring into the workbox, and the farmer entered while Margaret was leaving the room with the box in her hand.

"Unco liking for the women folk, Tam. Ye'll never thrive that gate, man, and business waiting," said Glenvernoch.

"A wee advice frae mistress Margaret is no unwholesome for a rough blade like me, Glen," rejoined the ready drover, putting as pleasant a face on his interview with the

daughter as at the moment he could afford.

Picardy, in following his herds that evening, found himself a prey to uncomfortable reflections. His sense of rising importance, with all its substantial signs to a mind like his, was beclouded by a sense of personal weakness and humiliation. He had accomplished nothing of the purpose towards which he had been driving; while, on the other hand, he had exposed himself to danger of person and mortification of feeling, and had seen all his underhand manœuvres, by which he had so far committed himself in what might prove an utterly fatal course, falling into nothingness. The fair world he had been picturing was turning black. He had enemies everywhere. His friends, where were they? The image of Martha alone still shone bright before him. The thought of that sweet plump figure, and all

its belongings, continued to course in ruddy warmth through his veins. But his hatreds were swelling rapidly over the good nature in which he fancied he had hitherto lived; and among the colder currents of his heart he became conscious, for the first time in years of acquaintance, of a rankling dislike to Margaret. It was clear he had no key, and he could imagine none, to her confidence. Far from being a help, she would stand in his way. She might save him from deadly harm, but she would frown like an iceberg on his passions, on his whole way of life. Our drover, however, was one of those men to whom, as in the case of ships at sea, depression on one side, however deep it weighs, only gives a corresponding elevation on the other; and having fortified himself at Lucky Heron's in the clachan by a strong potation, and hummed "The Deil's Dead" and other airs of a like

merry tenour, he found his spirits rising in a more happy poise. One gain, besides the profits of business, Picardy could always at least congratulate himself upon as the result of his adventures. He was the best-informed man in Galloway. Even in this ill-starred ride he had seen what Sheriff-Depute Graham would have given much to see with equal safety, what would have caused Claverhouse himself to prance like a war-horse to have seen. This information he could use discreetly, keeping to himself just so much as was for his own interest, and according to his own feeling to keep.

Whether what has just been related has any logical relation to what immediately followed must be left to the reader to conjecture; but this chapter would be incomplete without adding that, on the following night, a summons was served upon Glenvernoch to appear next day before the

Sheriff, where he was called upon to redeem his previous bonds, and to sign another for double the amount of the last, on a vague charge of keeping communication with the outlaw and assassin called William Hay, of which mysterious indictment all the sturdy demurrage of the farmer could obtain no explanation. Sheriff-Depute Graham conducted the summary jurisdiction, but the Sheriff-Principal sat beside him on the bench.

"I'll no—bear this kind—o' justice," muttered Glenvernoch, his nerves of expression strictured with anger and vexation. "I'll carry—it—to higher"—

"I know what ye mean, goodman," said Claverhouse, "you will appeal to old Sir Andrew, or Lord Stair, or his lang-tongued son John. You may as well appeal to Ailsa Craig. Away! carry out the sentence of the Court!"—a light laugh, a

bitter sneer, and a dark frown passing in succession over the mobile features of this light and fiery person as rapidly as the words passed from his mouth.

CHAPTER II.

Fear of change
Perplexes monarchs.
Paradise Lost.

Allan Peerie, after considerable absence, once more appeared in the streets of Wigtown. In his strange guise as fool, and manner of semi-idiot, usually attended by a group of boys, to whom he ministered much kind divertisement, and who had become fond of him—prepared, indeed, to defend and fight for Allan in a body if any one of their number should venture to be rude or too familiar. He had rubbed the smooth tissue, and counted the buttons of the

velvet coat in which Picardy now arrayed himself when at home and at Court; admired to the utmost limits of childish wonder the gold chain of the Bailie, and prophesied in childish accents to that pompous worthy what a great man he must be; was on terms of happy and established intimacy with the troopers, grooms, and other members of Clavers's body-guard; had presented himself with acceptance to "the right noble captain" himself—and was a frequent attender on the town sergeant and drummer, and other active limbs of the law. No one knew, or cared to inquire, where Peerie slept, ate, or drank. He seemed always to come in from the country.

It was a busy time for a few days in Wigtown. No military parades, but much hard work in councilling, with arrivals of deputes, commanders of garrisons, and such barons and heritors as were co-operating

or had interest with the Government, and among these last Kenmure.

A crisis had suddenly risen, and, blowing from all quarters at once, had brought Allan Peerie with the rest.

Tidings had reached the Government from Holland which augured too gravely that there might soon be other work to do than suppressing peaceful conventicles, hunting solitary outlaws, or forcing the test on unwilling subjects under the edge of the sabre or at the muzzle of the pistol. The numerous fugitives from England and Scotland in Amsterdam and other Dutch towns, not unnaturally in their circumstances, were fraternizing in a free, bold, and probably too passionate spirit. Argyle was preparing his armed expedition to the West of Scotland, and Monmouth, the banished though loved son of the too amorous King, his to the West of England.

Money was being unaccountably supplied to fit out ships and to purchase military stores. Both undertakings seemed small and perilous at best, but "conscience makes cowards of us all," and the suspicion and dread of the Government, once aroused, these loose passions soon enveloped all and sundry in their baleful wings. Though John Locke was writing his treatise "On Toleration" at Leyden, and Lord Stair his "Institutes" at The Hague, alike quietly and retired, as if glad to withdraw themselves in these philosophic labours from the tyranny and misery of the time, yet neither escaped the suspicions of the Government. They were fancied to be arming themselves in coats-of-mail like ancient demi-gods of war, spending their money and properties in arming others like modern paladins, and as for their literature and philosophy, preparing in Cyclopean forges thunderbolts

more to be feared than the shock even of arms. As for Lady Stair, there could be no doubt from what the Ambassador had written, and all report of agents and spies had said, that she was acting at The Hague in the same obstreperous spirit as she had acted at Edinburgh and in Galloway—attending prayer-meetings and preachings where, indeed, they were not forbidden, yet everywhere surely doubtful institutions, and moreover, calling upon her countrymen, whether in church or salon, to resist the devil of arbitrary power, and he would flee from them—would vanish like a nightmare. If Lady Stair was thus demeaning herself openly in Amsterdam, what might she not be doing secretly in Galloway and other parts of Scotland by letters? Perhaps recruiting for Argyle's expedition? Perhaps sustaining and encouraging even Hay in his prolonged defiance of the authorities?

Charles was probably the least moved among all his courtiers by this new danger to the restored monarchy. The troubles of his reign he had never been able to quell, had little patience to try even to understand, and had seldom touched but to aggravate them. His habit of sauntering, and lapping himself in baths of sensuous enjoyment, had largely grown upon him as he advanced in years, and as the confusions increased around him. Seldom has a man or king of men, of such keen wit and of such sardonic temper, abandoned himself so completely to the easy current and inevitable results of habitual self-indulgence. His sternest passions even had fallen into a soft, pulpy, and semi-amorous mould. His revenges, however bitterly conceived, were administered in a sweet-like disposition. He smote to the breast by epigrams the supporters of his divine right, and signed

decrees of death, or banishment for life, on the claimants of right of conscience with the same easy sardonic pleasantry. This "Merry Monarch," as he has been called, though probably at heart one of the saddest dogs that ever sat upon a throne, had assisted at the solution of an hydraulic problem, started, it may have been, in the Royal Society, though more probably among the *dilettante* natural philosophers abounding in the Court circles at that period, yet of some consequence. The problem was, how it could possibly be accounted for that when a fish of considerable size was put into a vessel full of water the vessel did not, in point of fact, overflow. The arguments in explanation of this remarkable discovery were, of course, extremely lengthened and conflicting; indeed, without apparent end, when the King, or some one weary of the contention—it must have been the King,

we think—remarked that there was nothing left but the "point of fact"—whether it was so. When the point of fact was put to the test it was found to be not so. "There it is," said his Majesty; "as I told you—no getting at the point of fact without an immensity of trouble!" But it was obvious to Charles, on this threatened double invasion of English and Scotch refugees from Holland, that good subjects violently moved or ejected, as they had been in large numbers of late years, had a tendency to return to their source; that the vessel or the sea itself would in any case be always full enough; and that on the whole he could hope to swim along as well with Monmouth and Argyll as with the Duke of York and Claverhouse.

This singular indifference of the King, however, only increased the ardour, the fears and hopes, the irresistibly aroused

self-preservative instincts of his ministers, courtiers, and military *commissionaires*, whose lives and fortunes not only hung on the possible success of these hostile expeditions, but whose possessions and schemes of ambition and aggrandisement might be incalculably enlarged by their overthrow, and the consequent extinction of all the chief persons immediately or remotely concerned in them.

To Claverhouse this new cloud on the horizon was altogether welcome. His rank in the army was still humble—only a "captain of horse, armed with cuirass and pistols," as Lord Fountainhall has said, and "with a Sheriff's commission," as the astute Judge has also added. The latter, indeed, of wide, almost too unlimited scope, yet now officially consolidated, with the help of my brother David, really learned in the law, into what seems a permanent

and compact hereditary Sheriffdom of Galloway, all well in hand, and where the whole baronage of the province being under one's hoof, there are spoils to be won. The barony of Freuch, already artfully realized, is an earnest of what may be done in these times by a "captain of horse," armed with a "Sheriff's commission," in addition to "cuirass and pistols." Good or evil stars! when one thinks of it, as we pace up and down the stairs and corridors of the old Sheriff's house in Wigtown, is there anything in this secured Sheriffdom of ours which we may not aim at? Old Sir Andrew already dispossessed, Lochnaw Castle and its lands and hereditaments, of royal origin, ready to fall like a ripe apple into the old hereditary lap of Sheriffdom, where it has fallen by royal favour since the days of Bruce as by inevitable law of gravitation! And Stair, with his lady of

Balneil and his Carscreugh, and extending possessions in the county, is not decree of treason and forfeiture already in preparation upon that cunning old Whig and dungeon of law-lore for aiding and abetting in this expedition of Argyll, much the same as we managed in the case of Freuch? To overthrow Stair and his wife, and have a scramble for their property at court! Ehew! May not a captain of horse and hereditary Sheriff, with the smile of Bruce now almost directly shining on his face, rub his hands in glee over such a prospect?

So Claverhouse was not unpleased with the impending trouble to the State, and his complacency was supported by the tenour of his letters from Edinburgh. Queensberry, in advising him of the national affairs, had written that he should now take the rank of colonel, the field for military talent

clearly widening, and that in order to separate the military measures in Galloway from the duties proper of the Sheriffdom, "my brother," Colonel James Douglas, would command the troops and garrisons in that province, and suppress all remains of a rebellious spirit in the upper districts —a matter of the highest importance in the present exigency, but one already so well-nigh accomplished that there could be no doubt that Colonel James would conclude it properly. Claverhouse, in his dragoon capacity, must hold himself immediately under order of the central power —Argyll and Monmouth threatening to invade the two kingdoms at once, and all the highest military talent in such supreme request! There was in these advices of Queensberry an appearance of supercession, as if the recent military exploits of the Sheriff-Principal of Galloway had

alarmed the representative of the King at Edinburgh, which they probably had; but the general tenour of the instructions chimed so well with the spirit of Claverhouse that he saw in them only a reflection of his own warmest desires. The climate of Galloway had never been quite wholesome to him. The dreadful single-combat apparition of Hay in the inn of Newton, and other incidents less startling, had placed him under an acute sense of deprivation of life in cold blood, and he longed for a safer and more crowded field. His powers of sheriffdom and his barony of French were intact. His good friend Queensberry only meant to introduce him into a larger sphere; and therefore, Claverhouse gave much weight to Queensberry's concluding injunction to relax in nothing as regarded the field-people in show of arms, but to leave affairs as smooth and settled with the

baronage and gentle houses as possible in the circumstances.

Chief among outstanding affairs was the disposal of Lady Hay of Arioland. To this Claverhouse addressed himself with will, in the twofold hope of terminating the career of her son and attaching Kenmure. The venerable Laird of Baldoon had been already told that Martha had identified herself so closely with the Outlaw that no clemency could be extended to her, save on the condition by which it was proposed to negotiate the pardon of the matron of Arioland, viz., the absolute surrender of William Hay. As for Gordon of Craichlaw, indictment of forfeiture of estate had been entered against him at the instance of Clavers, fired at the contumacious spirit of the old man, and resenting the manner in which his sons had delivered up their horses and arms as fiercely as if it had

been a declaration of defiance and rebellion. Claverhouse knew well the reproaches to which these and other severities exposed Kenmure from the numerous kin who looked to him for protection, and the irritation of mind in which these reproaches and the monitions of his own conscience kept the sensitive Viscount. But the pardon and liberation of his kinswoman of Arioland would help to mollify these bad humours. When Clavers, however, pressed the surrender of Hay as the indispensable condition, Kenmure refused to be a party in any such negotiation. He questioned whether the mother herself would take her liberty at so dear a price. It were enough that her son should leave the country for good and all. "Moreover," said Kenmure, "we have yet to put salt on his tail. He is still free of you and of me, and may probably insist on liberty to choose in what

part of the world his exile is to be," as, indeed, Kenmure had learned that Hay would insist, from a letter which Allan had found opportunity to put into the Viscount's hand since his arrival in Wigtown.

Many difficulties hereupon arose, and all arrangement was like to have failed, when Claverhouse at length said, "Let us waive final terms. Let the pardon be conditional, and meanwhile take the Dame under your free but safe protection, to be produced if no terms can be made with her scapegrace ruffian of a son." To this Kenmure, after some hesitation, agreed, and Allan saw with ill-suppressed joy the dauntless old lady who had often nourished and concealed him from his pursuers delivered by her guard into the hands of Kenmure, and departing in safety under the protection of the Viscount to Kenmure Castle.

CHAPTER III.

1. You'll be secret, Thomas ?
2. As a coach-horse.

The Rivals.

To the excited but terror-ridden population of Wigtown the deliverance of the Dame of Arioland was a not unwelcome sight. Coupled with the appearance of Kenmure on the scene, it seemed to many the beginning of a more merciful *régime*. Yet, by two of the burgesses who watched every turn of the official tide with peculiar interest (Picardy and the Bailie) it was regarded with more sinister emotions. Was it possible that Claverhouse could be turning over a new leaf, and in setting his house

in order before returning to Edinburgh on what might be a long absence, be making peace with his enemies, and, as a necessary consequence, preparing to throw over some of his officious friends? This rumour of invasion from Holland alone boded little good to the stability of cattle-dealing and other arrangements now comfortably going on. These thoughts were distracting enough to men whose sickles were already deep in a harvest-field rich beyond even their dreams. A full half of the landed area in Galloway was under military occupation and rapidly-increasing forfeitures to the Crown. Wherever forfeiture passed, or was about to pass, a stock-taking and valuation were necessary, and Picardy's hands were as full as they could be of this business, the fees for which, being professional, were wholly his own. But when Picardy bought to supply a mysterious demand for

stock issuing from Wigtown, it was the Bailie from whom he had his demand, and to whom he sold with a profit. Though the drover was rapidly gaining superiority over the magistrate on this system, yet the latter was not dissatisfied with his share of good fortune, and from a peddling business in the small wares of one of the smallest of county towns found himself rising daily into accountant-general of nearly all the cattle trade then in Galloway; was elated, proud of seeing his own foresight so amply realized, saw even brighter prospects before him; and out of the quiet though cunning exterior of a simple burgess had begun to swear and swagger occasionally like one of Clavers' dragoons. But this heyday of prosperity only made both drover and magistrate more sensitive of the slightest turn of affairs, and on the day of Lady Hay's liberation they sought with equal curious-

ness to know what the other had learned and might have to say.

They found each other after dark in a quiet hostelry in one of the vennels, where they had not unfrequently found each other of late, and settled private while discussing public affairs. The apartment in which they met—on this occasion lighted by two candles, which the virgin blaze of a wood fire threw into the shade, and wrapped the four corners in darkness visible—had now come to be called "the Bailie's room."

"What think ye o' this day's proceedings?" said Picardy as he mixed his first tumbler of hot punch.

"Na, what dae ye think, Tam?" rejoined the Bailie, also mixing; "ye hae maist knowledge o' the country."

"I think," said Tam, "the warld we're leevin' in, Bailie, is rapidly coming to an end."

"Gude forgie me for sweering!" quoth the Bailie, "but let me ask with a' reverence, are ye become a canter, Tam? Hae ye been reading the Word wi' Dick Cameron or that Mr. Runawick—a bairn o' the same deil—and sae hae lost a' speeritual sense o' the powers that be?"

"Baugh!" uttered the Drover with contempt, as he sparkled up a spoonful of the punch. "Dinna preach to me, Bailie; Clavers is showing the white feather, clearly the white feather, and we maun sidle"—tasting the punch—"back to the auld gentry of the country."

"Drink aff your toddy, Tam," said the Bailie, "and strengthen your silly head awee. Man, ye're unco wake in the pow the nicht. What gif I should tell ye a secret, Tam?" continued the Magistrate, as he drew upon his own tumbler, and seemed expanding into some important utterance.

"It's no for the like o' you and me, freen', to interpret the signs o' the higher heevens, but I'll show ye what a Bailie can see in the gliffin o' a dark aifternoon. Clavers showing the white feather, ye say! That's your notion, Tam, but it's no a notion a Bailie can enterteen wi' a' the information o' the secret cooncils afore him. Clavers, man, was never sic a hero as he is at this 'oor. Whan was it heard afore that a Sherra o' Galloway was summoned post-haste to the command o' a' his Majesty's forces in face o' a foreign invashun, neebor? There's a poo'r in that, Tam, ayont a ordinar' conception, as we maun baith admit. And what's thar on the ither side o' the accoont? Naething, man, verily naething. The dooager o' Arioland has a respite granted; but what does it a' signefee? Oot o' the clutches o' the jailor o' Wigtown, wha may be the deil himsel', she has faun

into the deep sea wi' Kenmure, as a hostage for the surrender o' her son—the surrender o' her son, Tam—the last spark o' rebellion noo in Gallowa'."

"Hum! Wha hae ye that fae?" asked Picardy, with remarkable coolness, considering how inquisitive he was.

"Fae nae clishmaclaver," replied the Magistrate, "as ye may weel jaloose when a bailie is speaking; and no a bailie only, but wi' a' respect to my gude frien' the provost, wha has higher duties in Parliament, I may weel say the chief magistrate in this Royal burgh; and in everything I do or say maun proceed as becomes my place and aith, on what's the law and what's the fact. I'm speaking, as I may say, on the tap o' the moont, for though the sherra-depute was owr thrang to be seen, I had some words o' the sherra-clerk. The sherra-depute, Tam, as I hae observed, is as like

the great Clavers as ae brither may be like anither, and the sherra-clerk is the ghaist o' them baith, gieing ane what is brewing throo their noddles in draps o' pure spirit, like this toddy. Here's tae ye, Tam, and may the merlin and the creel hae nae waur fishing!"

"It may be sae," rejoined Picardy, "but your creel is unco throuither, Bailie, and I'll no believe it's unco weel strapped on oor backs. What o' Baldoon and his dochter, did ye hear?"

"Ye may weel ask—the puir laird," said the Bailie, in a drawling and piteous tone —"he's nae doot mickle stricken doon. Ane canna help feeling, Tam, for an auld stoop o' the country borne doon by sae mony troubles. My heart is really sair for Sir David, for he was aye a gude neebor o' mine, and is to this day for aucht I ken. But, that aside, there can be nae mercy to

lady Martha, in raison or common justice, as lang as she keeps walloping aboot the hills wi' an ootlaw and an assassin. Naebody in their senses wad say sae. But whan the young woman's loon has been laid fast, she will be gled enoo to beild under her faither's bush, and, settling doon in wiser views o' the warl', be wooed and won by some thriving man on the richt side of the State"—the Bailie at this point winking benevolently at his companion, as if that would be a bright day for Sir David and the house of Baldoon! "What for no yoursel', Mr. Picardy, amang ithers?" rattled on the Bailie. "Far mair unlikely things hae come to pass. Deil burn me! as the troopers say—forgie me for sweering, Tam—gin I were ten years younger I wad cock my hat at lady Martha mysel'. I remember weel when she made a' us gallants in the magistracy a wee daft. She

was admitted by us a' to be the tap rose o' the coonty."

"Tut, tut! your pears are a' ripe, Bailie," said the Drover, not unpleased with the course of the remarks, but in rising contempt for the pretence of the loquacious busybody of Wigtown. "Ye'se makin' siller ow'r fast, Bailie; I maun drive harder bargains wi' ye. I see plainly that drove fae Glenvernoch on your terms wadna lae me a groat o' profit."

"Noo, Tam, ye ken my wye no to settle terms on the toddy, and ye needna try to wile me that gate. But speakin' o' Glenvernoch," added the Bailie, "it is there, man, Tam, whar ye hae shown the saft heed o' ye, or maybe the saft heart—for, gude faith, your heed is hard as ony airn when siller's to be made—and mair raisonable to think that this Margaret, wham there's noo sae muckle talk aboot in the cooncils, has

cast a glamour ower the saftest pairt o' ye. What a Mrs. Picardy, in sooth! She's the main spoke in that d——d wheel, Tam, that keeps birling at the head o' Penningham and Monygove, and had ye ta'en my advice on our first ride we wad hae riddled oot the concern and saved a' this aifter fash. The farmer, saucy carle, is noo weel under the clippers for his dourness, but wharfore he or onybody suffer for a gawky vixen in her teens? She should be brocht doon to Wigtown at ance. D——n me! as I should sweer, I'll hae to gang up wi' ye neist time mysel', Tam, and see the hiz—"

"Stap your lowse and silly tongue!" exclaimed Picardy, starting in his chair, and adding, "Ye dinna ken wha ye're talking aboot," as he struck his fist on the table with a thump that sent a shiver through the nerves of the Bailie. "You! What could ye ben' or brak in Margaret Wilson? Ye

wadna be twa seconds in her company till ye felt a presence ye never felt sin' ye were a sinner, and that's as lang as ye hae supped kail wi' a spune. In ten words fae her lips ye would shrink into your butes, and tho' ye were Claverhouse himsel', Bailie, it wad mak' nae difference—no a bit difference. Sic her firmness o' sense, sic the search o' her een into the darkest corners of ane's heart, the evendoonness o' every word she says, and a' said sae wise-like that I defy ye to think she's in the wrang. Hear me, Bailie, this is the cursed mistack we're aye making at oor ain peril—thinkin' religion can be shaken oot o' thae hill folk as ye would shake stoor oot o' an empty meal-poke! Let Clavers gang wi' his sojers and ye may see sic an ow'rturn in Gallowa' as will frichten the saul oot o' thee's feeble body."

"Whew!" sounded the Bailie in the

cavity of his mouth, while mixing another tumbler. "Whew! Ha! ha! That's richt, Tam, help yersel' to what ye hae mickle need o'. Wha telt ye, man, the sojers were ga'in awa? Ha! ha! What queer notions drovers hae! Ye seem to draw a' yere information frae the conventicle, Tam. Wad ye believe me when I say that the sojers are to be increased abune a' number, that the lord-colonel Douglas nae less, ain brither to Queensberry, wha is the King himsel' here in Scotland, is to tak' the command—a' to be fiel'-practice noo thegither —and the bike amang the hills to be skailed withouten mercy—sent up the lang lum like sae mony shavings!"

"Hae ye that fae the Sherra-clark?" asked Picardy, eyeing the Bailie with some amazement.

"Fae the same," said the man of office with a significant nod of assurance. "Dae

ye think a bailie, and a chief-magistrate to boot maist pairt o' the year, tak's the hie policy o' State oot o' the sou's mooth? Na, Tam, na; a bailie maun gang to the fountain heeds o' the truth—that's to say, gin he's to be worth a bawbee in his office."

It is unnecessary to follow the talk of these worthies further, because Picardy having assured or warned the Bailie that it would be "the safer for their craigs, gin it were a' as he had said," their intercourse began to take a more playful form, beseeming gentlemen at ease, and chiefly bent on making each other happy. The musical talents of Picardy were brought into ready exercise, and were fortified in snatches of song or chorus by the piping treble of the Bailie. The Drover sang, "Malcolm Caird's come again," in his most rollicking style, and as they rose to their feet the Bailie drank to the confusion of all out-

laws, freebooters, robbers, and assassins whatsoever!

"Wha the deil hae we here?" said the Drover suddenly, as he was draining his last glass—the wood-fire, sunk now into a phosphorous glow, permitting the candles to spread an equable light through the apartment—"What bundle o' rags is this in the corner?" And the Drover, lifting one of the candlesticks, inspected closely the recumbent figure. "Allan Peerie, as I sall sweer!" Allan was feigning so profound a sleep that the usual arts by which he disguised his features failed to serve him in this serious crisis. "The idiot," added the Drover, drawing the light over the composed face, "is a hantle wiser and better looking when asleep than when wauken."

"He's a maist faithfu' crature that," joined in the Bailie, as he stepped to the

corner of the room, and looked at the face of Allan. "Gude help him! The like o' him maks me amaist greet. Clavers shows the genuine kindness o' his heart in his liking for Allan. Let him lie, puir hameless being. Naebody kens whaur Peerie sleeps, but I'll get Luckie to gie him beddin' for ae nicht at ony rate. Sae let us gang, Tam, to oor warm beds, and let us be thankfu' that we hae been kind to ane o' God's orphans."

"The silly idiot's as soun' as a tap," said Picardy, "and wadna thank ye, Bailie, for a better bed than whar he lies."

And the Bailie hiccupping that he would speak to Lucky nevertheless, the two worthies took each other's arm, staggered out of the room, to the great relief of Allan, whose powers of self-control had seldom been put to so severe a stress.

Next morning Claverhouse took his de-

parture for Edinburgh, surrounded by a strong guard, and was convoyed a mile or two out of town by the Provost, Bailie, and other town and country officials on horseback. Allan did not enter an appearance. Bearing not only much news, but several letters—one from Kenmure to Hay, and another in the same legal though unsigned hand, which Martha recognized as the voice, if not the hand, of her father, Allan was already striding into the defiles of the Caldons ere Claverhouse had crossed the strand of the Cree to Machermore Castle—his first stage to the capital.

CHAPTER IV.

> See, winter comes to rule the varied year,
> Sullen and sad, with all his rising train,
> Vapours, and clouds, and storms.
>
> *Thomson.*

It was now near the end of November. The days were so short that the sun, seldom seen, only shed a grey light over the dull landscape six or seven hours in the twenty-four. The numerous streams were often flooded and impassable. The hill tops were covered with snow, gliding in lengthening streaks down the ravines, and lying deep and white in the upper corries as the down on the bosom of a sea bird. A keen frost over night, clearing the sky and pre-

paring a magnificent sunrise, would sometimes open a scene of extraordinary splendour. But the atmosphere would dull ere the afternoon, more snow fall the night-long, and the whole surface of the country next morning be covered with a white mantle. Biting east winds would then blow, and drying this wintry dress of the earth, swirl it up again into the air, and fling it back into great heaps here and there, everywhere. Then torrents of rain would fall, reducing the lower grounds to a pulpy ooze, and flooding the streams still more.

It was the season when the large open-air conventicles broke into sectional prayer meetings under roof in farm kitchens, in barns, or under the still more imperfect shelter of a sheep-ree with a few plaids and skins raised against the wind from whatever "airt" it blew. And when hill farmers

and their herds, throwing the cares of State and even of family aside, had to labour night and day in bringing their sheep and cattle into lea corners of the farms. It was also the season when the soldiers in outposts were withdrawn to castles and towns, and the fury of persecution was restrained by sheer force of the natural elements.

But the military activity in Galloway did not appear to slacken on this occasion and in this memorable winter. From all the shore districts horse and foot soldiers were moved northward. The mouth of Glenluce was filled as full as it could hold with troopers. Parties of horse and infantry marched in upon Glenken until the military hospitality of Kenmure Castle, Newton, the Manse, and neighbouring farm-houses were taxed to the uttermost. Machermore Castle and Monygove on the

Cree had for some time been, and were now more than ever, mere barracks. The hand of Colonel James Douglas, the new commander, was clearly visible. Coming in from Dumfriesshire, he meant to search all these upper glens of Galloway, even in winter, to have his forces for this purpose in concentration and activity, and while pursuing this local duty, be ready to direct them on any part of the West Coast where Argyll might choose to land.

There was no rest in these circumstances for Glenvernoch. Corporal M'Graw and his *posse* he had already begun to look upon as permanent lodgers for a time. But a day or two after the second decree of Court had passed upon him, Captain Strachan and a party of horse rode up from Castle Stewart, and had to be refreshed before setting out, in company with the foot soldiers, on what was destined to be

the first of a series of reconnaisances in the less accessible parts of the country. On returning from these expeditions, part of the horse would sometimes be left at Glenvernoch over night, in order to be nearer the duty of following up some incomplete observation of the previous day. But these reconnaisances, though repeated for some weeks as often as the weather would permit, led to little or no result beyond the unreasonable oppression of the farmer, and the discomfort and disorganization of his household. Hay had judged too well from the tenour of his information what the tactics of the military would be to expose himself or his friends to unnecessary danger. He knew he was where no armed force could venture in the night, or suddenly approach in the daytime —that the object of the enemy in the meanwhile was to spy rather than to act—

and he so ordered, by warning his followers, preventing stragglers, and keeping vigilant outlook himself, that the enemy should spy as little as possible.

Nor was Hay, indeed, at this juncture in any desponding mood. The horizon seemed brighter to him than it had been for a long period. The respite of the infamous sentence on his mother, and her surrender into the hands of Kenmure, where she would be safe and in comfort at least for the present, inspired him with new hope and energy. The contemplated expeditions from Holland for the deliverance of the whole country were equally sustaining to his spirit. The landing of Argyll might change in an instant the condition of affairs in Scotland. It might open to him and thousands more a career of arms; or should he be driven to extremity before that event, he might escape

to the Continent and join the ranks of those who were preparing a bold attempt to liberate their native land from a hateful and remorseless tyranny. These hopes and feelings, indeed, Hay had to combine in some measure with the reply which he had now to give to Kenmure, who felt keenly and anxiously that in his ward he had simply a hostage for the submission or self-banishment of her son. Had it been allowable to Hay to depart freely whithersoever he might choose, he would have retired into exile at once; and Martha would have borne with patience, and even with satisfaction, a separation in which she would share at home a safety which her lover would enjoy abroad, and both might still hope for some early and happy reunion. But Kenmure intimated that, in present circumstances, freedom of exile, even if attainable, could only be attained on the

condition usual in the case of a prisoner of war—viz., not again to bear arms against the King or the King's Government, which parole when once taken could not be broken without an unpardonable and treacherous breach of military honour; and that "internment" in some given place would probably be insisted upon. These conditions were most unwelcome to Hay in the prospects that seemed opening before him, and a correspondence, which had abundant opportunity of hanging fire, was never brought to a definite point. Hay, in his eager grasp for liberty, and in the buoyancy of a manly and expectant spirit, delayed any decisive surrender of his future to the latest moment. But Kenmure had also warned him that to appear in arms, or at the head of armed men, during these negotiations might be fatal to the protection of the good Dame

of Arioland; and to this warning he felt it necessary in his heart to give some heed.

As Christmas approached Glenvernoch had the satisfaction of seeing his house and farm relieved from military occupation. Even Corporal M'Graw and the guard of foot were recalled to Castle-Stewart. Whether this leniency arose from the increasing economy of the Farmer's larder, through which, he said, "as mickle o' his stock had passed in ae month as he would sell in the next sax," or from a natural desire of the military to enjoy the Christmas and New-Year festivities in a manner worthy of the camp, or from some deeper strategy reflected in subsequent events, history has left no precise information, and romance itself, in its wingful licence, must forbear to disport too freely. But it was a source of relief and joy in Glenvernoch. Some of the

old freedom, innocence, and gaiety of heart revived. So great had been the sense of oppression of late that Yule and New Year seemed to pass their day among them with a fresh and more cordial welcome. The domestics gathered round the family altar as usual. On some Sabbath days shepherds with their wives and children, and older dependents of the farm, came in such numbers as to fill the long kitchen, on both its lower and upper floors. Margaret moved about with all her queenly air, but with a lighter step and happier face than in those past weeks. "Her father's house," which to her was but a dim, earthly type of the sanctity and glory of the Father's House in Heaven, seemed once more her own. Bright halcyon! Yet it was but the brief gleam of sunshine in a thunder-riven sky, preceding a darker gloom.

CHAPTER V.

They tented on the field, or sought
The shelter of some ancient roof or tree,
And spread the tabernacles of the Lord;
Lifting the voice of prayer and psalm, like cry
Of Jacob, when strong in faith, he wrestled
With the Angel for the Father's blessing—
And like song of native tenants of the grove
On wings of love to greet the smile of God.
When lo! swift as the falcon pounces wild
On partridges of the mountain, circling
Squadrons of the foe rush'd on their retreat;
And not less swift than rage of vulture brood
The fear and havoc spread among the flock
Of worshippers, till flight and massacre
O'erspread in sable gloom that Sabbath morn.

Anon.

MARTHA and Margaret had passed words of friendship and encouragement by various

opportunities in this Christmas interval without having seen each other; and as the days began to lengthen the spirit of both seemed to rise into a calm and trustful confidence. "The Lord would deliver them and theirs, in His own good time, from His enemies." Martha would like so much to go down to Glenvernoch for a day or two, but Hay had forbidden it as unsafe to herself, as well as to her friends in the hospitable farm-house. "If Martha cannot come to me I can go to her," said Margaret, with her usual sovereign sense of freedom of movement.

On a clear but mild day towards the end of January, Margaret set out on a visit to Martha at the hut, accompanied by her young brother, and intending to remain overnight. There had been several nights of hard frost, with bright sunshine during the day and a bracing and joyous atmo-

sphere; no prospect of a sudden change of weather. Next day was Sabbath, and was clear and bright like the previous day. There was a meeting as usual in the house at the Caldons, and Margaret and her brother went down with Martha to the worship, intending to leave at the close of the service on their way homeward. It was to be an ordinary prayer meeting under roof—no preaching, but reading of the Scriptures, praise and supplication. But the cheering weather brought so many out from a distance that the house could not contain them. The men grouped themselves on forms under the trees; the women sat in the doorway and at the open windows.

Hay, who had been keeping strict watch for some time on the passages of the Dee as the quarter whence the first military movement would most probably proceed—

Colonel Douglas having established his headquarters at Newton with complete domination over the open country of the Glenken—mounted his horse early in the morning, and rode forward in that direction, unarmed save by a hunting-knife, which hung concealed at his side in a sheath of leather. Allan had posted himself on the other side of the Caldons, where he had a view of the fords of the Minnoch and Cree. Hay had ridden several miles when from an eminence he descried a body of cavalry, with a brilliant staff of officers, advancing in the distance—the videttes of the troop so near that he could discover the colour of their horses. With a beating heart he turned his horse's head into the lower ground, and galloped back at all speed to the Caldons.

The assembly, who had already risen, and were preparing to return to their

homes, were thrown into agitation on the arrival of Hay, more by the haste in which he had been riding than by his demeanour. He told them there was danger, but they had time to withdraw, and was enjoining them to be calm, when Allan made his appearance, and whispered him that a party of infantry with several horsemen were approaching on this side of the river, apparently from Monygove, as he had not observed them crossing the Cree. Hay placed Martha, and Margaret and her brother, under the guidance and protection of Allan. Others he directed what paths they should take, and told them not to run or hide, but to walk deliberately towards their various dwelling-places. To the men who had come from a distance—some of whom were already marked by the Government—he was more explicit as to the troops advancing on both sides. Those who had

come from the westward would have difficulty in eluding the observation of the military party reported by Allan, yet it was safer to move and trust to their knowledge of the country for escape or concealment, than to remain where they were. Gilbert Milroy, of Kircailie, and five or six of his servants and neighbours, took this course, and immediately withdrew. Others said they would go indoors, barricade the house, and wait the assault. While Hay was finally urging them to disperse, the hoofs of cavalry sounded from the hardened glades of the forest, and remounting his horse he rode off by a way of his own under cover of the woods, though not wholly unobserved by the foremost of the troopers now advancing into the open, the Colonel at their head.

Allan, in conducting his charge by the shortest tracks to the precipitous ascent

where he could hope to bid defiance to armed pursuit, saw on his first survey from the rising ground that two of the horsemen, with a comrade on each croup, had separated from the party of soldiers he had first observed, and were pressing forward as direct as the crow could fly towards the zig-zag leading up to Martha's hut. He urged the women now to make all haste, and they would be safe. He himself would follow more leisurely. Margaret's brother, with boyish love of danger, loitered behind the rapid footsteps of the maidens, till Allan, perceiving that one of the horsemen had dismounted, and had entered on foot the bottom of the narrow and winding pathway, ordered the lad to run and attend upon his sister and lady Martha, to whom he told that they were pursued.

On reaching the little wooden gate into

the hut, Margaret said to her companion, "Stop not here, Martha. Go on—go to the farm-house, or any of the other houses —and you, Tam, go with her. I alone will stay here. What can they say or do to me?"

When Margaret spoke with this decision in any crisis it was difficult to resist, and Martha's trepidation gave additional force to her authority on this occasion. She was under no direct ban of the Government, as Martha really was; and so the idea of personal flight or concealment did not occur to her. Taking a hasty farewell, Martha, attended by young Wilson, passed on along the moor; and Margaret entered the hut.

Allan meanwhile, conscious, by repeated glimpses, of the figure of a man striding up the tortuous path, and not sure that one or two others might not be following, had

taken post at a narrow part of the track where scarcely more than two could pass between the jutting shelves of rock on one side and the rocky precipice on the other. His only arm was a stout cudgel, but here he could hope at least to delay or even stop pursuit. At length footsteps were distinctly heard, and Allan, starting forward, the two men were instantly in grips. They wrestled strenuously, each striving to put the other on the precipice, or, wheeling round, to gain or keep the advantage of the rising ground. Allan held his superiority in these respects, but was pressed by his antagonist against the rock where the two men, breathless, yet firmly locked, gazed for a moment or two into each other's face.

"Picardy! is it thou?" gasped Allan. "What a villain to meddle thus in what is no quarrel of thine!" And with a physical

effort, answering to the moral repulsion he felt, Allan flung his antagonist some yards out of his grasp. Picardy, staggering on the brink of the precipice, drew his pistol and fired without effect; but at the same instant a ball from a stealthy carbine in the rear pierced Allan's heart, and he fell in mortal agony.

Picardy, not doubting that he had committed murder, bent over his fallen victim; and as the long sleep settled on the firm and composed features, was reminded of a sleep he had seen on the same face not long before. "Is it possible? It is Allan Peerie!" muttered Picardy, with a shudder, as he swept the cold sweat from his brow, and hurried up the narrow and winding path.

The Drover rushed into the cottage, closed and barred the door behind him, and telling the matron to let no one enter,

stepped into the "ben," where he was confronted—by Margaret, calm and silent as a statue.

"You here!" uttered Picardy, after a pause of surprise, and with an accent of unutterable disappointment. "Where is Martha?" he then demanded menacingly.

"She is not here," said Margaret.

"Fykena with me, mistress Maggie, as if ye were in Glenvernoch," rejoined Picardy, hardening into a sneer. "Tell me instantly where she is, or I will search every corner till I find her, at your peril."

"Search, then!" said Margaret. "Dae ye disbelieve me, Tam?"

Picardy at this moment did not really know what he either believed or disbelieved, but under a ghastly sensation that he would like to strangle Margaret on the spot, he left the closet, worried the good wife as he had attempted to worry Mar-

garet, and searched all parts of the hut till his futile eagerness became a folly to himself.

"Ye ken where Martha has gone, Margaret, and that I mean only to free her and you frae danger," he said, as he returned to the closet in a wheedling mood. "Tell me where she is—it will be a' for gude."

"Stand!" cried Margaret, lifting her arm, and averting her look, as he advanced towards her in this more seductive spirit.

He suddenly seized the uplifted wrist, and made Margaret tremble for a moment in his grasp, while he grinned in a new storm of passion—"Tell me! tell me! or it will be the waur for yoursel and for your father." It was only a moment.

Margaret freed herself like a sylph from the strong but relaxing hand of Picardy.

The mention of her father had roused at

once both the tenderness and indignation of her heart, and she returned upon Picardy with all her majesty of spirit.

"Monster of cruelty! hunter of blood! Slay me where I stand, but think not I shall aid you by a single word."

Then quick as the flight of an arrow, the return tide of feeling seemed to fill her soul. "You, Tam, to come to this!" she said with a piercing look but in a melting voice, tears dropping from her eyes as she turned and covered her face.

Picardy stood some moments in breathless silence. He felt like a thrice-convicted criminal in the presence of justice. He would have pleaded for mercy if the words could have come to his lips. He would have taken Margaret in his arms, but he dared not. "Touch me not," was written over her as visibly to his eyes as if she had been a being of another world.

There was a loud knocking at the door as from the butt-end of a carbine, and Picardy, utterly abashed, and feeling probably that a hot pursuit of Martha, with troopers as attendants, would not answer his purpose, withdrew. "There is nothing here," he said to two soldiers at the door. "We are too late."

When Colonel Douglas drew up his troop on the open sward before Caldon house there was little trace of an assembly of rebels in that quarter. All was silence, almost vacuity of human life. Videttes had seen the skirts of retiring fugitives, and horsemen were sent in pursuit through the woods. But the door of Caldon house was closed, the windows shuttered, no sign of resistance visible. "This is too good," said the Colonel—"break up the door;" and the horsemen, with axes on their saddle-bows, rode up the avenue, and

smashed the door, while the Colonel was ordering a circle of guards round the rear of the dwelling. Some may have escaped from the fated house, but six men were seized in the interior, and were taken before the Colonel on the mound where the preachers were accustomed to hold forth on the great days of Caldon assemblies. Had they taken the Test? Would they take it now? The usual category. They had taken no Test, and would have nothing to do with Tests, whatever might happen. "Shoot them down," said the Colonel; and the six men were shot dead with a superfluity of bullets.

CHAPTER VI.

Farewell! But not for ever.
Cowper.

Hay, on his escape, made a long detour, which only a master of the country could have made with any hope of success, for he was pursued and observed by the troopers as long as there was light. Near midnight he arrived, leading Billy by the bridle, at a shieling, miles from any farm-house, inhabited by a solitary shepherd. A pale light shone through a small window, denoting that there was a lonely watcher even at this late hour. Before he had touched the door it opened, and a young

woman threw herself into the arms of the weary rider. Need we say it was Martha? These loving and devoted souls had scanned their situation so often that they had provided for nearly every emergency, and had fixed a point on their line of retreat where, if separated by any chance in the flight, they might hope to find each other. After embracing Hay, Martha stroked the neck of the tired but not heated horse, whose rider had walked him a long way. "I must have something for Billy," said Hay. "Corn, water, and fodder are ready for him in the shearing-shed behind the shieling," replied Martha. Having attended to the wants of his trusty steed, Hay returned to the cot, and stepping lightly over the bodies of the shepherd and a youth who lay asleep in plaids on the floor, passed behind a screen of wicker-work into a little apartment, where Martha had meanwhile

prepared a blazing fire and other comforts.

Hay, in the conversation that ensued, was prepared to admit that the decisive moment had come of which they had often spoken of late. But how could he leave his beloved? Content would he be to live even for ever in that humble shieling with Martha, the charm and solace of his heart, by his side.

"Fly, Hay, fly," urged Martha, out of a brave but self-sacrificing heart. "Think what a merciful deliverance you have had! And how many such! Do not tempt the hand of Providence too far. Fly, and I will gladden my heart every day with the thought of your safety—and with the certainty of your return," she added, as she dropped on her knees, beseeching her lover, and beseeching Heaven.

"What has become of Allan?" was one

of Hay's first questions, at which Martha's head drooped. She proceeded to relate what she herself knew, and observed that the shepherd had told her more. "But do not ask me to repeat," she said, weeping, "what breaks my heart to think of. He will tell you."

"Is Allan taken or dead? Tell me, love!" pressed Hay, with a foreboding in his countenance which showed he was prepared for the worst.

"He may only be a prisoner," said Martha, in a low and hesitating voice.

"Then I shall attempt to rescue him," said Hay.

"But he is wounded, my love,—said to be sorely wounded," rejoined Martha.

"They will not know him, yet they will wish to keep him alive!" said Hay, clinging to the hope of rescue, and speaking rapidly as his thoughts hurried over the probable

destiny of Allan. "They will take him to the Caldons. Perhaps leave him there a day or two under a guard! He may be rescued!" added Hay, striking the fingers of his hands together, and starting to his feet in a wildish joy.

"Oh! Hay, why wring the cruel word from my lips? Allan is dead—slain in defending me!" cried Martha, as she threw herself on the bosom of her lover, and gave vent to her grief.

"Merciful Heaven!" ejaculated Hay. "Why not spare this heavy blow? My brave Allan! My faithful friend! As bold as a lion, yet as gentle as a lamb, and as wise and witty as he was bold or gentle! Gone! What has he not done for me? O! Allan! Was ever love of man to man like thine!"

The tears of Hay mingled with those of Martha over the death of Allan, to whom,

indeed, they owed much which could never be repaid now in earthly coin.

When the shepherd, wakened by the sound of voices out of a fitful sleep, came into the closet, he told Hay that Allan had been shot without doubt on the path to the hut, that Margaret Wilson had been dragged away a prisoner, and that there had been a dreadful massacre at the Caldons. "But dinna say onything to the sleeping lad aboot his sister," he added. "It mayna be a' true. As for the massacre, there can be nae doot, for I heard the platoon-firing mysel'."

Hay was deeply depressed; sometimes wildly distracted, as woe after woe weighed on his spirit. Every inch of ground seemed to be breaking up under his feet, while separation from Martha yawned before him like a bottomless gulf. But Martha herself was no miserable comforter in such cir-

cumstances. Her bright heart of hope shone out all the more brightly against the despair of her lover. "We will meet again, love," she kept saying through the night hours; and in the morning light, amid scenes of passionate farewell, which drew tears from the hardy shepherd, and filled the son of Glenvernoch with wondering interest, Hay passed away from the eyes of Martha, as he must now pass from the vision of the reader, till some event in the narrative discovers his sad fate or more or less happy fortune.

The conquests of the royal troops on this victorious day, however, were not yet exhausted. When the pursuing parties came in to head-quarters at the Caldons they had prisoners, some of whom were discharged by the Colonel, since no previous suspicion rested on them, and nothing good or bad could be said but that they were

taken in the act of walking quietly towards their homes. Others were put in irons to serve either as criminals or witnesses; and among these were Gilbert Milroy of Kircailie, and three others, captured in the same hunt—one a relative of his own, another a servant on his farm, and the third a gardener on the neighbouring property of Fintilloch. It was in the afternoon of Monday before they were brought in, the chase was so exciting; the troopers led on over rivers, and through bush and brake, and when the quarry was lost for a time, scouring round till they beat it up again, and started off on a new "tally-ho," one after another. When this game is once set afoot, it becomes almost a sport on both sides, with the difference always between the hunted and the hunter, the hare and the hounds. When the four were at length hunted down the shades were

descending thickly on the Sabbath day at a point so far from the Caldons that captors and captured had to spend the night together in the cold frosty air as more or less miserably as they could.

Colonel Douglas and his staff had a few triumphs of this kind while they reposed on their laurels, and pursued their searches and examinations some days in the head-quarters at Caldons. But no one could tell what had become of the man on the dun horse who had been seen galloping into the woods, or who he might be. He was an unsolved enigma. Yet some of the prisoners must know him—there being much suspicion in the mind of the Colonel that he was or might be Hay.

CHAPTER VII.

The scourge of Heaven! What terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined;
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.
Gray.

Much excitement thrilled the small, socially dull, but naturally beautiful and sequestered, town of Monygove one day the week after. The entry of a victorious army, as it seemed to the hamleters, of horse and foot, with a long string of prisoners handcuffed, and bound together in twos by cords! Some of these were recognized as men who had been often seen in the market, and in the parish church near by. But drum and fife

were sounding, colours flying, with the measured march of soldiers, the jingling of cavalry accoutrements, and a brilliant staff of officers in scarlet and plumes. All drew up in the middle of the little town.

The prisoners were formally assigned to the custody of the Earl of Home, as commanding officer of the district, to be examined, to have the truth brought out of them one way or other, and to be finally or preliminarily disposed of by swift sentence of court-martial. The limited dungeon of Machermore and the various thieves'-holes of the parish were already so full that there was no resource but to lodge the prisoners in the parish school, turning the schoolmaster and scholars out of doors, establishing a military guard in the seat of learning, and substituting horrible instruments of torture for the ferule. This arranged, Colonel Douglas and the cavalry filed off

in animating order through the strands of two rivers that join at Monygove, with an island as a natural bridge in the centre of the confluence, and, forming on the opposite bank, moved off in close order on the road to Glen Luce.

It had been the ancient custom in Monygove to pass judgment on the mote-hill—a grassy and throne-like bluff forming the termination of a narrow but precipitous bank or wedge passing down between the two rivers to this point, curtained by trees. Between the little town and the mote was a trellis bridge over the smaller of the rivers flowing on that side, convenient to foot passengers, but easily defended against unruly encroachments of the populace. On the other side of the ridge was a larger and deeper river, and a bank so steep as to be wholly unscalable by man or horse. There were probably few motes in the country so

perfectly secure and defensible as a court of justice should be. But the mote of Monygove had the defect on this occasion of having the parish church and churchyard immediately behind it on the same plateau, of being scarcely distinguishable, indeed, from the old consecrated ground; and the process of justice to be adopted was too horrible for the sacred precincts—the gibbet, which in dark feudal ages had long swung like a half-cross over a portion of the graves, having in those more civilized times disappeared. What was about to be done might, in such close propinquity, awaken even the dead. The conforming minister himself had doubts about it. And so it was resolved that the trials should proceed at the school-house, where the prisoners were lodged and guarded, on an eminence with green slopes from the school-door down to the kailyards of the hamlet.

The court-martial opened on Monday and continued over several days. Not that the prisoners were so very numerous, but the process to which each was subjected was so peculiar, and had so often, on a reconsideration of the evidence, to be repeated.

There was a large concourse of people of the most various character, and from all parts of the district. The common curiosity to know what had been done to break the last lingering nerve of rebellion in the hill country, the still deeper anxiety to know who were the prisoners, and what might be their fate, brought many. Among others was the wife of Gilbert Milroy, with a baby in her arms, and one or two attendants by her side. She sat day after day on a stone near the school-house, and as often as cries arose within the place of torture pressed forward, and as often as she pressed forward was driven back by the

soldiers, sometimes with curses, while she was breathing only the most humbly whispered prayers. Glenvernoch appeared early to know whether Margaret or Thomas were among the prisoners, and, on learning that they were not in the list, departed in an abstracted and undemonstrative mood. The Bailie of Wigtown also came, and made himself prominent by an officious fuss about the schoolhouse, as if he were a member of the court, and still more prominent in the ale-houses of evenings, with so many troopers round him, swearing it was all right, and that the truth must come out—"Ay, deil burn me, as I should sweer, till there's no an auld wife or a young lass, or a dour carle in the kintra but will hae to own what is due to law and loyalty." Picardy did not come with the Bailie. The cattle-dealer's wits were so deeply agitated by what he had

done and seen in his own person that he had no desire for the present to urge his inquiries any closer. He would rather hear at a distance what ensued.

Milroy was one of the first of the prisoners brought before Lord Home and sheriff-depute Graham, who appeared as his legal assessor. The nonconformity of Milroy, like that of nearly all the prisoners, was too avowed to bear much question and answer, but there was another purpose —information concerning others—and to that end there was another process of law than mere question and answer. Milroy was strapped on his back to one of the school forms, and his wrists having been secured with open palms to the feet of the form, matches were introduced between the several fingers, fired, and blown by the military satellites so as to keep them in flame between all the fingers at once, until

the victim gave answer to the various interrogations of the inquisitors. Considering how many questions there were as to Hay, and this one and the other, and that to no question could any answer be extorted by any amount of torture, it may be conceived how tedious the process was, the more especially when a prisoner, who did not yield to-day, might by various groans and wincings give hope of a more wholesome terror when confronted with the similar agonies to-morrow.

Milroy, being a man of substance, and supposedly susceptible of the finely cautious and preservative feeling which a love of pelf imparts in extremities to the worldling, was despatched with others in irons and by slow stages to Edinburgh, to have the matches applied in Ayrshire, Lanark, or Linlithgow, as a preparative for the more dreadful tortures of the High Court and

the Grassmarket, or banishment with his ears cropped to the plantations as the final doom. The three men captured with him, being of the ruder sort, were sent down to Wigtown for more summary procedure.

The result of this court-martial on the whole satisfied the Bailie, but he avowed that there was nothing after all for settling rebels and outlaws like the hempen cord or the volley of carbines. His oaths and jests which drew ribald laughs from the soldiers whom he was treating liberally to beer, were heard and remembered by others in a more serious and resentful mood. On mounting his horse he found himself cut off from the island strand by a furious rabble, whose hootings and peltings followed him nearly half way to Machermore, to which he fled as the only port of safety for the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

Here lies our sovereign lord the king,
Whose word no man relies on ;
Who never says a foolish thing,
And never does a wise one.

Rochester.

While these orgies were being celebrated in a secluded district of Galloway, three words first whispered in the galleries of Whitehall by affrighted courtesans, echoing rapidly through the metropolis, announced in a few days at Edinburgh, and thence circulating through all parts of Scotland, arrested universal attention. "Death of Charles!" The poor monarch, unable at last to taste pleasure as he had long been

to wield the sceptre, had after a few days' illness, "a fire burning within him," passed away for ever, apologizing to his attendants that he had been an unconscionably long time of dying. "The King is dead," was uttered by every tongue, but few could add with heartiness, "Long live the King;" for though James was ready to ascend the throne, his unpopularity among the English was well known in Scotland both by friends and foes; his boldly avowed attachment to the Roman Catholic religion was an almost inseparable obstacle to his reign; and the Government might be reeling to its foundations.

There was a deep lull in the court-rooms and barracks of Galloway. The hand of power seemed paralyzed; to be revived in a few more days by tidings of James's quiet and undisputed accession, but to be confirmed only by degrees as assurance

became more sure. Until the new King had actually reigned for a brief space, Lagg had better be quiet, Winram discreet, the Sheriff-Depute calm and conciliatory —Claverhouse himself not knowing well at this moment what to do after the old fashion. A new Parliament had also to be elected. Much attention must be given to that—to get the right men sent in. But James II., once firm in his seat—then! The disposition of James was well known in Scotland, particularly as regards the anti-conventicle and torture affairs of the State. If Solomon had been induced to chastise with whips, Rehoboam, when really king, would scourge willingly with scorpions. But not till then; and so for some weeks there was a quiet in Galloway that had not been known there for years—a quiet of the ruling power. The troops were drawn into their quarters.

Few soldiers were seen on the march or on distant outposts. The civil population, on the other hand, began to move more freely, and went distances to markets and to see friends.

> "As when a storm has ceased, the birds regain
> Their cheerfulness, and busily retrim
> Their nests, or chant a gratulating hymn
> To the blue ether and bespangled plain ;
> Even so, in many a reconstructed fane,
> Have the survivors of this storm renew'd
> Their holy rites with vocal gratitude."

These lines of Wordsworth portray, as finely as may be desired, the light of peace and thankfulness which gleamed over Galloway in that brief space of weeks. The death of Charles, great as the relief was to himself, diffused an air of relief over many parts of Scotland, where for twenty years his misguided rule had weighed like lead on the public spirit.

A striking proof was given of the new

sense of freedom breathing lustily over the blighted province, when Sheriff-Depute Graham, after exhausting every effort to secure the return of "fit and proper persons" to Parliament, at length made proclamation at the Cross of Wigtown, and adjourning to the Court-house, found Sir Andrew Agnew, ex-hereditary sheriff, and Colonel William Stewart, Glenvernoch's own "laird," whose castle had been seized and garrisoned, unanimously elected knights of the shire. There was no one to move or second any other persons. A curious procedure this on the part of the test-ridden barons and freeholders, which mortified the Sheriff-Depute, and was simply gall and wormwood to Claverhouse. The sheriffdom might escape him after all, if he could not rouse some of the old hot blood.

Margaret, as soon as Colonel Douglas and his troops had moved from the

Caldons, returned to Glenvernoch, where her presence relieved a weight of suspense, anxiety, and terror. Her mother received her with open arms, and wept tears of joy as she fondled her and sought to know what had happened, and how she had escaped the massacre. When her father returned from Monygove, and found his beloved Margaret alive, active, and ordering affairs of the house as in the better days, his satisfaction was unbounded. Yet it had its own mode of expression. He did not fondle over Margaret. But on the contrary, told her she was "an ow'r venturesome dame, giein' mickle fash to her freens." There was not a soldier, however, now about the place, and assured that his son was safe as a roe on the hills, and like a roe would return sooner or later, to the low grounds, Glenvernoch entered with new spirit into the affairs of

the farm, and, calling upon Sandy, proceeded to " redd up the confushion, and see to what was gude for the bestial."

Thomas acquitted himself with such diligence in his novel situation as squire to lady Martha, that in a few days he was able to report the complete solitude of the country round the Caldons, and reassuring the grieved and distracted damsel of safety, conducted her back to the hut. From that point, after some reconnoitring, he hastened down to Glenvernoch, and cheering the people there, returned to the Caldons. Martha with joy found her communications still partially open, and, despite the burden of her heart, rewarded the lad with some of the bright smiles which he had seen playing on her pretty face in his father's house. Thomas, indeed, began to manifest an irresistible inclination to return to the hut, and to

minister to its fair and lonely occupant. Martha had a native power of attaching people to her person, and her situation of love and peril fascinated the sympathies of the raw but free-spirited and imaginative country-boy.

The dreadful severity with which Colonel Douglas swept the Caldons had not failed in its effect of terror. He had completely broken the ties of religious community which had hitherto bound together a scattered but substantial population, and in which they had felt themselves both safe and strong. The fate of Milroy of Kircailie, and other prisoners, at Monygove, was enough to have shaken the firmest nerves. But, like all furious retributions of a like kind, the severity overshot its own mark. Moderate men like Glenvernoch could see no justification of such merciless and murderous procedure,

and, while awestruck, were conscious of a deeper heart-repugnance to the system they had so far allowed to be imposed upon them. There was terror, but under the terror a firmer and more general sense of resistance. The death of the King, moreover, had suddenly transferred a portion of the terror to the persecutors themselves, and with this transfer there was a corresponding elevation of hope and courage on the other side.

The Bailie and Picardy watched the course of this new crisis with peculiar concern, but it seemed to affect them differently. The Drover maintained in his private confidences with the Magistrate that the Government was spoiling their own cause by over-severity—wild, aimless attacks on people in general—when all that should be done was to pick out a few principals, and pull or wither them up by the roots

gradually, so as to allow the business of the country to proceed in a regular way. "Never was sic a blunder as that at the Caldons," said Picardy. "The man on the dun horse, Bailie, was without ony doot Hay! His capture was the thing needfu', but it hasna been dune, and noo, when the King's deid, ye'll see the clew a' rinning into threed. Oor necks are no' worth a boodle."

"I differ frae ye hailly," said the Bailie. "As for Hay, ye'll never see him in this warl' again. Seveerity! Cracking strong, able-bodied men atween the fingers at Monygove—ca' ye that severe? Dae ye see thae twa clepped stumps, Tam," holding out his left hand, two of the fingers of which were reduced to a common mass above the middle joints. "Man, that was the effec' o' a silly dive, when a callant, into a pot o' het parritch, painfu' at the time, bit

o' nae consequence to the veetals. Na, na, the neck or veetals o' a destined bailie are no' sae easily snigged. Charlie was a thowless, guid-for-naething o' a king, aye covering a sair wi' some saft plaister or ither. Jamie, noo fairly seated, is worth three o' him. Ye shurely ken the Duke o' York, lang oor Veeceroy, Tam?"

Picardy, while allowing himself to be influenced by the presumptuous spirit of the Bailie, usually held an independent view, both as regarded the course of public affairs, and his own immediate interest therein; and the present juncture between two floods, as he thought, from which great changes might issue in one direction or other, seemed to him supremely suitable for urging a private suit to which his hopes still clung. He took a long night ride alone, well mounted, and in a dress, under the heavy riding-cloak, which would

have graced a young gallant of the time. He had no cattle-dealing business on this occasion in view. Only one absorbing errand. Still, there he was, if questioned or suspected, "Mr. Picardy, the drover," on peaceful ways inclined, and ready either to buy or sell. Next morning found him standing, unmantled, at the wicker-gate of the hut, under the beams of a cheerful sun. The door was open, he entered, and passing into the parlour softly, there—wished-for joy of his heart!—sat Martha reading, the little orphan girl on a stool at her feet. The lady gave a start of alarm at this most unexpected of all apparitions.

"Dinna be afraid, lady Martha," said Picardy, bowing and advancing, cap in hand. "I come as your freen."

"Stay!" exclaimed Martha, rising still more alarmed. "What has brought you here, Picardy?" she demanded, with a voice

and gesture in which there was not only alarm, but anger and impatience.

"Gudesake, sweet lady, dinna tak' me for an enemy or a thief. Only a message in a frienly erran' fae Sir David," said Picardy. "Possess ye, my lady."

"From my father? Be seated," replied Martha, conducting the little girl clinging to her hand towards the door, and, whispering some words in her ear, closed the door and resumed her seat. "What is the message?" she asked.

Picardy, having laid his cap on the floor, thrust his hand into the inner pocket of his velvet coat for the message, yet was in no hurry either to bring it out again, or to extricate the message from other papers when the hand did come out of the pocket, but entered into a lengthened train of observation, in which he remarked the difficulty of communications—fathers could not even

write in plain and direct terms to their daughters for fear of discovery—times were getting always worse—the Caldons affair spreading terror over the whole country side—but now there was an opening of escape—when the door of the parlour opened and the matron looked in, and before she had time to speak, received an assuring smile and nod from Martha, and withdrew; while Picardy went on to say that no doubt his old acquaintance with Sir David, and the many kindnesses he had received from the good Baron, had marked him out as a special and trusty messenger on this occasion, and how happy he would be if he could be the means of helping her out of all danger, with tender allusions to his admiration of her when in her teens at Baldoon, as at length he handed to Martha the impatiently-quested message from her father.

Martha looked eagerly at the document. It was only the autograph and seal of which the reader already knows. Yet Martha's eyes rested and moistened over them some moments. She had not seen them for nearly two years. Her suspicion of Picardy, at the same time, was too deep to be readily overcome, and her natural shrewdness instinctively connected this paper with the ring stolen from Margaret, and brought up in passionate relation to past events all her antipathy to the bearer.

"This is not a message," she said. "It is only a signature."

"Granted, lady Martha; it's only a sign o' confidence"—

"Confidence, indeed! What confidence can I place in you, Picardy—you who have only crossed my path in a wicked guise?"

"Confidence or no confidence, mistress Martha," said Picardy; "ye're hameless,

wooerless, almost fatherless, and I alone can save you. If you do not believe your father's word"—

"Give me a word from my father, and I will listen."

"The word I hae from Sir David," vowed Picardy, "is that you are to place yourself under my protection, safe from a' your pursuing enemies, till sic time as we hae made your peace wi' the Government."

"Go, Picardy, go! You are a traitor!" replied Martha.

"Dinna say sae! Give me one word to Sir David, sweet lady! Let me e'en kiss your pretty hand," said Picardy, with a final and most amorous effort, when he was interrupted by Thomas Wilson, who stepped buoyantly into the room, the matron at his back, with the kitchen tongs in her hand, and the little girl holding on to her skirt.

Martha, in her fear, ran to the lad, and put her arm round his shoulders.

"Eh! young Wilson! Is it thou? Glenvernoch again!" grinned Picardy bitterly.

"Ay, Tam! It's me. Is't a fecht ye want?" rejoined the youth, in a manly spirit, ready for any combat that might ensue.

The odds were now great in favour of Martha, and the circumstances still more adverse to Picardy. These had assumed a dramatic attitude he had never imagined, and his spirit sank at once to zero, less under a sense of the danger than the ludicrousness of the plight in which he found himself.

And so Picardy, overpowered and all his love-making oozing out of his finger-ends, had to retire once more under the forbidding shadow of the Glenvernochs.

"Ye'll joodge me better, lady Martha, when I'm better understude," were his parting words.

CHAPTER IX.

He has half the deed done, who has made a beginning.
Horace.

The stealthy appearance of Picardy in the hut threw Martha into new trains of apprehension and distress. It was obvious that her retreat was known, and that a net-work of espionage still surrounded her. The signature of her father, however obtained, was striking enough. It might mean little or much; yet it bore to her no express tidings, and it came through a most suspicious channel. The more she reflected the more she was confirmed in the opinion that Picardy had been practising on her father, and that the ring he abstracted

from Margaret had been the talisman employed for what could only be a nefarious purpose. The situation of her father, since the recent startling events, had been weighing heavily on her spirit. It was probable enough that the disappearance of Hay, and the totally unarmed resistance to the massacre at the Caldons, might have reached the ear of the old Baron. But the fate or whereabouts of his daughter could not be known to him. The brain, hands, and feet, which had hitherto so faithfully served Martha, and anticipated her every wish in such emergencies, were now fallen away from her in the flight of Hay and in the cold corpse of Allan. She shed new tears of bitter agony over these bereavements, and in rising out of bewildering grief into practical resolution, felt a more ardent longing to communicate with Baldoon.

This question went back and forward between Glenvernoch and the hut until Margaret solved it in her own thought.

Baldoon was under the immediate eyrie of Wigtown. When the gaol was full prisoners were committed to the guard-room of the convenient manor-house. Cavalry horses were almost constantly picketed in its parks; and the Baron since he had subscribed the Test under a continuous pressure of family disasters, wave rising over wave, felt himself in age and weariness to be more a prisoner of war than the free lord of a castle and its many acres. Young Wilson, indeed, would have carried a missive or verbal message from the hut to the gate of Baldoon, and demanded admission to the Baron, with defiance to all and sundry thereto opposed. But the judgment of Martha did not commend the adventurous spirit of her eager but inex-

perienced squire; and Glenvernoch had been heard to warn Tammas that "if he wad gallant aboot it must be amang the hills, and on no accoont stravaig in the laigh country or in the neeborhood o' the dangerous clamjamfry aboot Wigtown."

"Sic a simple maitter," said Margaret to herself. "I will go the first fine day—will take Agnes with me. I will not go to Baldoon, but to Mrs. Lachlison at Kirkinner. Take the ring with me. What a happy meeting! Hoo I wad like to see that sainted, guileless woman, of whom no one speaks ill, whose breath is like the fragrance of flowers, whose spirit rises to Heaven. When we hae prayed, and read the Word, and talked togither, glad will she be to tell Sir David a' aboot mistress Martha. What hairm can there be in that under ony law?"

Thoughts thus deeply conceived by Mar-

garet, in her own free and brave spirit, were usually acts ; and such they became on this occasion. The sense of relief that had spread in a few weeks over the country, rendered the adventure reasonably safe in the eyes even of Glenvernoch. His "laird" was to be elected Member for the Shire ; and all persons not under direct ban were moving about from place to place with much of the old freedom of the country.

On a fair spring day Margaret mounted a broad-backed nag on one side, while Agnes, with the help of Sandy, sprang into the pillion behind her on the other. "Noo keep awa' frae Wigtown, weans," said the mother, reiterating a previous advice, "and dinna gang into ony company but the ane, and be hame early in the aifternoon."

Glenvernoch, looking wistfully after his daughters as they rode down into the haugh, muttered, "No unco safe, I think, for thae

queens to be travellin' sae far sooth." "Fearna ye, maister," observed Sandy. "They sit as cosy as a pair o' doos in their nest. Marget has her een on ae fit and Aggie hers on the ither, and there's nae surer nag in the parish than Donald. I could lay my life on Donald." "Weel, weel, Sandy," said Glenvernoch with a sigh, "that's what ye're thinking o', and I'm maybe thinking o' something else."

The journey of the damsels proceeded with little interruption and with marks of civility which would have disarmed fear, had they felt any. A gruff sentry at the gate of Castle-Stewart stopped them, and was asking their names, where they were going, and other formal questions, when Corporal M'Graw issued from the inclosure. "Mistress Margaret! Gude morning!" said the Corporal, with a wave of his hand. "That's Glenvernoch's dochter and her

sister," he added to the sentry. "Nane hae a better richt o' pass."

Lucky Heron, seeing two young women on horseback approaching the Clachan, came out to meet them. "Bless me! You, mistress Margaret! And this is Agnes. Sic strangers—ye'll shurely come in awee?"

Margaret made excuse that they had a distance still to ride, and wished to be back early.

"Weel, gude be wi' ye, lasses, and if I'm to forgie ye, licht as ye come back and I'll hae a nice posset o' mulled wine, no for every ane," said Lucky, as they moved on, with smiles and thanks to the landlady of the Clachan.

Shortly Margaret and her sister were in full view of their destination. Eastward the town of Wigtown, resting against and minimized by a background of sky, bay, and headland—the Bladenoch flowing towards

the sea between the hill on which the burg was situated and the rich parks of Baldoon, the turrets of the old castle seen above the trees—and here, on this other side, Kirkinner, the steeple of the church, the manse, the dots of wood, and houses. The young women were too entertained by this prospect to observe a rider approaching them at some distance, until Margaret suddenly said —"Here is Picardy," with a start of surprise. She had come to associate every appearance of the Drover with evil. Yet he had always shrunk before her hitherto, and why should she be afraid? "Ride past him," whispered Agnes, clinging her arms closer round her sister. But Picardy immediately drew up, and their horse, as by instinct, stood still at the same moment.

"I declare! Mistress Margaret! Wha had thocht o' meeting you here? Hoo's a' at Glenvernoch?" said Picardy, in the

frank and hearty style usual to him when on lawful business.

"We're a' middling, thank ye. Gude morning, Mr. Picardy," replied Margaret, urging forward Donald with her switch so smartly as to rouse him from his reverie.

"Will ye no tak' me wi' ye, Margaret?" cried Picardy, as Donald was bearing the young women onward. To which Margaret only replied by a forbidding gesture, and "I'll see ye at Glenvernoch."

The Drover had not proceeded many paces uphill till he found himself involved in a dozen perplexing inquiries. The pending return of Sir Andrew and Castlestewart to Parliament, as well as his own recent disappointments, had made Picardy extremely susceptible of alarm as to the course of events. Where could Margaret be going? What might her errand be? Probably to Baldoon—a communication from Martha

to her father —a disclosure of the treacherous intromission with the ring—a window opened into the darkened hive in which he had been working, and where he could scarce bear to look at his own image. Or might it be a determination of Margaret herself to go before the Sheriff-Depute, and denounce him? She was one who would dare anything, if deeply moved, at whatever peril to herself. His recent interview with Martha must be known to her through her brother, if not directly from Martha. Margaret, in short, knew what if published by her voice would blast his prospects, and however protected by the authorities, render the pursuit of cattle-dealing and life itself impossible to him in Galloway. He became violently excited by these hurried thoughts; passionate, and red in the face. The demons of fear, jealousy, anger, hatred, and revenge seemed

to storm and take possession of his heart at once. He wholly forgot in this paroxysm that Margaret had saved him from the avenging hand of Hay, and forgot the unaffected and right-hearted kindness he had always experienced at Glenvernoch. "Blast them! Are-na they up to the neck in communings and conventiclings? Better crush than be crushed!" fumed Picardy, in the worst possible mood a man can be, as he turned his horse's head; and observing for a little the direction taken by Margaret and her sister, rode back rapidly into Wigtown.

The damsels lighted at the hostelry in Kirkinner, and committing Donald to his corn and hay, walked out to the farm-house of Widow Lachlison. The good old woman was at home, and Margaret, on announcing herself, was surprised at the immediate welcome she received. "I hae heard o' ye—I

hae heard o' ye, my fair young woman," as she embraced Margaret, " and you, Agnes, too, dear—I ken a' about the Glenvernoch folk, and the trials ye hae had. I'm so glad to see ye, and ony o' the richt sort." " In thae times," she added, as she led them into her sitting-room, " ane seldom meets wi' folk they can open the heart tae. Maist feck seem to hae nae hearts or een ava," she said, seating her young visitors. " Or maybe I'm growing blin' and douf mysel'," sitting down in her chair, where stood a little round stand, on which lay an open Bible with spectacles over the page, " and dinna see, gude help me, as I ocht to see."

Margaret felt so much at home that it seemed unnecessary to produce any credentials, but she took the ring off her finger and showed it to the good woman. " Ay, that's fae leddy Martha; I ken a' the circumstance o't weel. Puir thing! my

heart has bled for her. She was sic a true and blythsome young leddy, and should hae had sic better fortune. Tell me a' noo aboot leddy Martha. Was she really killed, as they say, at the Caldons, or is this a token that she is in the land o' the leevin' ?" Margaret gave her old friend an assuring account of Martha's safety, and her anxious desire that her father should know the truth, and have some token from her. "Nae deefficulty aboot that," said Mrs. Lachlison, "noo when I ken hoo the maitter stauns, tho' Sir David's no the man he was when mistress Martha saw him last. They're killin' him by inches. But I'll gang to Baldoon mysel', for I haena been sair fashed sae far, tho' I ken I'm in the black books. Dinna be feared, my dear lassie. Let us rather be thankfu' for sae mony gracious deliverances. I see the hand o' God in what is happening, and

there's coming a day o' great relief to Zion, tho' ane canna tell wha may yet hae to suffer. For what can ane dae but suffer, if called, whan they'll no lat the quatest folk abee?"

Margaret would have stayed long with the pious widow of Kirkinner, whose words, as they proceeded out of a simple but full and glowing heart, seemed to open to the receptive spirit of the much younger woman a Mount Pisgah view not only of the promised land of earthly peace and security, but of the infinitely richer promise beyond the grave. Yet having succeeded in the main purpose of her adventure, Margaret was too mindful of the parental injunction to be home early, and felt too grave a portent of evil from the unexpected observation of Picardy, to lose much time; and so with her sister rose, and declining pressing requests to take some dinner, "and e'en bide

a nicht," parted from the old lady with many adieus and promises to meet again.

Sudden as Margaret's shock had been on the appearance of Picardy in the morning ride, her surprise was much greater when the same person was the first to accost her at the door of the hostelry. Picardy was known to be an able cattle-dealer, but he here proved himself to be a finished hypocrite. "Noo, mistress Margaret," he said, the first salutations over, "sae far doon the country ye maun really let me see ye hame, pairt o' the wye at least, for it's aboot Wigtoon here, sae mony troopers roving aboot, there is maist danger."

"Thank ye, Mr. Picardy," replied Margaret, showing no fear, yet full of suspicion, "ye're vera kind. Bring oot the horse," addressing the innkeeper, "we maun hasten."

"Step in, leddies," said Boniface, "the

pownie, weel fed and weel rested, will be oot directly. Step in."

Margaret and Agnes followed the invitation of the landlord, and Picardy followed after them, talking now to the one, and now to the other. "Noo, mistress Margaret," he said, after establishing what he thought a truly cordial relation with the damsels, "I hae sae aften been interteened at Glenvernoch, ye'll alloo me to offer some refreshment. What wull ye hae? To be safe and lafu' doon here, wee'll drink to the King's health, noo that the King's deid," lowering his voice to a whisper in the last words, with a sly and captivating wink to the girls. From which generous offer Margaret turned aside to settle the corn and hay with the landlord, and this done, looked out at the door for her steed, long of coming in these feverish moments, when she was met by a *posse* of sheriff

officers, armed with the Sheriff's warrant. "You are Margaret Wilson, daughter of the farmer in Glenvernoch?" asked the leader. "Yes." "And this is your sister—Agnes?" he added, pushing in, and looking at his paper. "Yes," was again the reply. "Then you are our prisoners," concluded the officer, while Picardy was pacing back and forward exclaiming, that it must be all a mistake, and that he would go himself to the Sheriff and expose the wrongousness of the arrest, in which rhodomontade he was only stopped by a withering look from Margaret, while Agnes was clinging in terror to her bosom.

The young women, handcuffed, were marched into Wigtown, and lodged in the cell reserved for others of the same sex, with what ebullitions of womanly humiliation and rising senses of uprightness, and inexpressibly varied anguish, on the part

of Margaret, and what tears and sobbings on the part of Agnes, must be left to the conception of the reader.

Next morning Widow Lachlison was arrested soon after sunrise, while kneeling in prayer or meditation at her little round table with the open Bible; and was, apparently from some instinct of the authorities that she and Margaret should be kept apart, carried to the dungeon of Machermore, more irregularly crowded than even the female cell at Wigtown.

CHAPTER X.

Woes cluster; rare are solitary woes;
They love a train, they tread each other's heel.
Young.

The suspense and anxiety in the farm-house of Glenvernoch as night began to set in without return of the absent girls, and as the Farmer paced up and down the farm-track and from one knowe-top to another, giving vent to every imagination of mishap and disaster, were extreme. The goodwife ministered her words of comfort on the brighter and not less probable side of the case with the effective artlessness of a perfectly genial nature. The girls had no

doubt been induced to stay overnight at Kirkinner, where they would be out of harm's way. "And, maybe, they had gude reason to tak' kind advice, sin' if they saw ony sign o' trouble on the road doon, it wad surely be better to stay till neist morning. The ride was nae sae short for lasses no that aft in the saddle." By these and such arguments Glenvernoch was gradually impressed, and had been brought into some composure, resolved to wait another daybreak before setting out in quest of his daughters, when the tidings of the arrest came, vague, wild, half-uncertain, but flapping ever more believably on the wings of the wind that carries swiftly the bad news, till, from a sure quarter, it broke upon them all like a thunder-storm.

The mother sank into her chair, speechless. No word of comfort from her lips now. Her pulse beat weak, weak — so

weak, her face so pale, her breathing so low, that the domestics thought more than once she was already dead. Glenvernoch was neither to hold nor to bind for a time, as he strode and staggered from one part of the house to another, and out and in door. No one could venture, not even Sandy, to approach him, till physically exhausted by shocks of rage and inconsolable vexation, he flung himself on his bed, and trembled, moaned, and wept as he might have done as a stripling bereft of his first object of darling passion.

But Gilbert Wilson, though of deep feeling, was a man of strong elastic nature, knowing pretty well the world of struggle he was living in. Next morning the usual *rôle* between him and his goodwife was completely reversed. He was the comforter and not she, still weak, pale, and almost wordless. "Cheer ye, gudewife,

I'll see what this deevil's wark at Wigtoon is, an' what they hae to say to my dochters;" and so set out stoutly on a journey to the county town, of which travels he was to have an indefinite series for some weeks—staying days at a time in the town, and having more a home in that now intensely legal, official, and military quarter, than even at Glenvernoch.

The steeple of Wigtown, often seen before with little or no disagreeable sensation save of a passing trivial sort, appeared on this day to Glenvernoch in a new shape. It seemed to him he was advancing towards a den of dragons of which this glittering steeple, low in the horizon, was an upward and fiery stinging tail, curling over hideous cells beneath, in which young and old, innocent and guilty, were being gnawed and consumed by the jaws of dragons in a hotness of ravenous fury, and in a sickly

malaria of feeble dying despair, the stench of which rose into his nostrils, and affected him so deeply, corroborated as it was by his immediate after-experience of the atmosphere of courts, the smell of dungeons, and the food of prisoners, that the nausea —a peculiar *dégoût* of taste, smell, and nerve—thus engendered, never left him to the end of his days.

Glenvernoch's doleful broodings, on his approach to the Royal Burgh, were not relieved as he rode round the Gallow Hill, and saw three dead bodies dangling in the air, which, on inquiry, he learned, were the bodies of the three men captured with his neighbour, Milroy of Kircailie, now himself a broken and tortured victim on his way to some hard doom.

Within the last few days the authorities, reassured by advices from London, well spiced *viâ* Edinburgh, had suddenly put

forth new vigour. James, on his accession, adopted an ingenious but tortuous policy. He had gained the temporary confidence of the English by professing profound respect for their National Church, and proposing toleration and freedom to Nonconformists, Roman Catholics included; judging probably that the Church would be most effectually, or at all events most safely to himself, restored to the good old faith by the gradual introduction of Roman elements, much after the manner of the Ritualists in the present day. In Scotland the course adopted was different. Nothing was said about toleration and liberty of Roman Catholics. The King appeared to think that in the existing Episcopal establishment of the northern kingdom he had ample security of all the Popery he required. It followed that nothing was said of toleration and liberty of Nonconformists in general. On

the contrary, the Royal injunction was that Nonconformists in Scotland, whose *status* more especially was covered by legal national acts, were to be pursued with the utmost rigour of the laws passed in the last reign—thus striking more directly and heavily at the adherents of the preceding Presbyterian establishment than even at the Cameronians, who had begun to be despised and treated as pariahs. James, whose views and inclinations were well known to his ministers and officers in Scotland, succeeded in throwing extraordinary fire into the Scotch Government while he was prating sweetly of security of established rights, religious freedom, and universal toleration to the English. With Argyll's expedition in immediate prospect, it was deemed necessary to act swiftly and boldly, to clear the field of all this nonconforming obstinacy at once, and prepare a hopeless landing

and overwhelming discomfiture to the foreign refugees.

This firm set of the barometer at head-quarters imparted much elasticity to Lagg, Winram, and other myrmidons of power in Galloway, who, after a brief interval of most unusual restraint for them, sprang like hounds from their leash on the prey around them. Even the legal, sedate, and smooth Sheriff Graham, stimulated by the fiery injunctions of his brother Clavers, resumed his duties with a kind of clerical fervour. It was to prove a bad time for them; but it became an unfortunate juncture for the cause, the most touching and sacred to him on earth, which Glenvernoch had now on hand.

In reply to his urgent and persistent inquiries of the officials what the law had to say against his daughters, the Farmer could only learn that they had been apprehended

and indicted on a charge of being guilty of rebellion at Bothwell Bridge, and of attending twenty field conventicles and twenty house conventicles—information which only increased Glenvernoch's laceration of heart and confusion of understanding, for he was prepared to swear and prove on the spot that the charges were utterly false and impossible of being true—Margaret having been only twelve and Agnes only seven years of age at the period of Bothwell Brig, while, as regarded conventicles, Agnes at least had scarcely ever been beyond the bounds of Glenvernoch farm-house. To these earnest asseverations the officials could only return a smile of wonder at Glenvernoch's ignorance of the law. He ought clearly to take legal advice. This was a general form of charge and indictment, indeed, that had become of use and wont in such cases. To have spoken to, or have been in corre-

spondence or on friendly terms with any of the outlawed insurgents of Bothwell Bridge, was the same as to have been engaged personally and actively in the rebellion; and as for conventicles, it was of little consequence what number was alleged in the indictment, since to have been at one was as bad in law as to have been at a score. This form of process had also undoubted convenience to the authorities, since it dispensed with all minute evidence, and rendered it unnecessary to bring forward such handsome voluntary spies and suggesters as Picardy, whose production in one case would have spoiled their utility in all future cases. The Sheriff-Clerk was no doubt right, therefore, that Glenvernoch was ignorant of the law as it then was. But this did not satisfy the reason or sense of justice of the Farmer, and consequently he did not relax his robust importunities.

It was at length obvious to the Sheriff-Depute himself that some tub must be thrown to this whale, daily splashing through the usually quiet waters of Wigtown, and gathering round him an increasing number of sympathizers. The demand of Glenvernoch to see his daughters was conceded. And on the basement of the prison he was conducted to an oaken door crossed from the lock and hinges with iron bars, and studded with iron rivets, through the aperture of which, not more than three feet by three, he was asked to follow the turnkey into a den of no agreeable atmosphere. "I'll creep into nae sic holes," said Glenvernoch; "bring oot my weans whar' a faither may see them;" and Margaret and Agnes had the joy of embracing their father in the porch of the prison. "Puir innocent bairns!" said Glenvernoch, as he pressed them in his

arms. "What on earth can ye be guilty o'?" "Ye ken maist a' I am guilty o', faither," said Margaret, weeping. "But this is nae new thing. They hae pressed me to tak' the Test, and tae tell a' I hae seen and dune. Dinna press me, faither, to dae sic things. Will ye no press me, faither? for I could not breathe again the air o' heeven. But what has Agnes dune that I hae dune, or what reason that she should suffer what I may suffer? Tak' her hame wi' ye, faither, and I'll be glad, and I'll hope."

"I wad rather stay wi' Margaret than leave her till ye get us baith oot, faither," cried the younger girl, joyfully imagining that in the presence of her father she had an omnipotent protection.

An interview, deeply affecting to the parties, and striking and impressive to the spectators, ended by Margaret and Agnes

returning to the cell, and their father to knock more determinedly than ever at the door of the Sheriff-Depute.

It was finally decreed by Mr. Sheriff Graham, in the reason and equity of the case, that Glenvernoch, on forfeiting his previous bond, and subscribing a new one for £100 sterling to produce Agnes as witness or offender on demand of the authorities, the younger daughter might be released. To this Glenvernoch assented, and carried Agnes home to the lonely farm-house, with no little satisfaction to the inmates. "That's ae lamb oot o' the jaws o' the wolf," he said—"but there's the shearling yet;" and all thought of Margaret.

The arrest of the two sisters, as soon as known at Glenvernoch, passed readily to the hut of Martha above the Caldons, and threw the young lady into the depth of

despair. She was overwhelmed with grief for Margaret, reproached herself as being the cause of her ruin, and saw nothing but the blackest and most deserved ruin to herself in the immediate future. As the tidings of calamity day after day—the arrest of Widow Lachlison, the utter desolation and misery at Glenvernoch—were borne in upon her, the depression of Martha became more extreme. For some moments she appeared to herself cut off from all hope both in this world and the next. Hay had gone, Allan was no more, and the hands which in this extremity she had hoped to reach to her father were cut down, leaving only an abyss, oh! how great when even Margaret had gone down in it, beyond the reach of either word or letter, aid or relief. The means of exit available to Martha, but which she had declined in other circumstances, now recurred to her

in more favourable colours. Anywhere—the wilderness, the foreign strand, the void of nature—would be preferable to this sickly, raw, pestilence-laden Galloway, where she seemed to be stifling in a demon-thrall, fatal to all her associates, and now utterly hateful and alarming to herself. In a few days, flinging aside her despair, and rousing all her energy, she fled; and the son of Glenvernoch, scarcely less agitated, fled along with her.

CHAPTER XI.

Put them on their trial! Yea, truly, put their nose to the grindstone. Try them with fire.

Cynic.

The authorities at Wigtown hurried forward the trial of Margaret and the widow of Kirkinner. The two women — one young, spirited, and of graceful mien; the other old, frail, and venerable in character as in years—had been apprehended on the same information, were suspected of being engaged together in some law-defying correspondence, and they were conjoined as panels in the same indictment. The trial is denominated in the old records "ae

seize," or what in modern phrase would be "an assize," indicating some form of jury as then known to the Scotch law, of the calibre of which jury some idea may be conceived from the fact that the Bailie was "chancellor." But the presiding deities of the scene were Sheriff Graham, Lagg, and other Sheriff-Deputes, with Major Winram at one end of the bench and Captain Strachan at the other, as representatives of the military power.

The elder prisoner was brought up from Machermore Castle, and led direct into the court-room. With such privacy had the trial been arranged that few even in Wigtown knew the day or hour it was to take place. With some show of courtesy, Glenvernoch, who had been hovering about Wigtown in an uneasy spirit since the arrest, was apprised of the procedure only about the moment when Margaret was

conducted between two turnkeys from the cell into the dock, beside her aged accomplice. They smiled, but seemed surprised that they should thus meet together for the second time in their lives.

According to all forms of civilized justice, ancient and modern, the panels should have been informed on what grounds they had been arraigned, and the witnesses or informers of the arraignment been brought forward to give evidence. But the formal and unmeaning indictment having been read by the clerk, the trial immediately assumed the arbitrary, inquisitorial, and browbeating course of the period. Both women had already, though assured that their liberty and lives depended on compliance, refused in their cells to take the oath of abjuration, or make any recantation touching religion. Their peculiar character was thus well

known to their judges, who, not to go over old ground, sought to turn them into witnesses against others, and plied them with questions as to what they knew about Hay, Martha, and this and the other matter, and preaching at conventicles. Both replied in effect that they would not criminate others of whom they knew no crime. Would they pray for the new King James? If their prayers could be of avail to the King, they would pray for him; but they must not be understood to pray for any of his acts, or the acts of any of his officers, that might be contrary to God's will. The firm and cutting negatives of the culprits only increased the fury of their judges, and drew down upon them louder threatenings — Lagg audibly growling, "Licht the matches 'tween the fingers o' the obdurates!"— till the women, seeing that their answers

had rather a bad effect than otherwise, prudently remained silent—the old Margaret resting her grey and widowed head on her hands, and the younger drooping her eyes under their lashes, and lifting them at repeated questions in glances of calm but silent rebuke to her inquisitors.

Sheriff Graham, in more courtly phrase than Lagg, reminded the panels that they were bound to tell everything they knew in matters concerning the public weal; that if they refused they were liable to various processes of torture, according to law; and was proceeding to explain *seriatim* what these were—

When Margaret, interrupting him, said, "Ye needna threaten me! But tell me what ill I hae dune, and I'll answer."

A unanimous bench, with expressions of much disgust at Margaret, here looked at an equally unanimous jury for their

verdict, when the Bailie, as chancellor, rose, and in a speech of some length, said that what he had seen and heard that day was shocking to him, and must be shocking, as he thought, to all decent and law-biding persons. He hoped and prayed never to see or hear such contumacy in a court of justice—a court sitting, verily, in the King's name. The jury was of opinion that the panels were guilty as libelled, and sent them with every good-will to their doom, under such merciful consideration as might be deemed due by the higher powers to the age of the one and the youth of the other—though in his mature life as a Bailie and a Magistrate of some standing, these, both the youth and the age, could only be accounted aggravating circumstances.

The sentence of the Court on this 13th of April was, "that Margaret Lachlison

and Margaret Wilson, found guilty as libelled, be taken to stakes within tide-mark on the [blank day] of May next, and there tied to said stakes till they be drowned."

The novelty of this capital sentence, the atrocity of which has merited the horror of seven generations, may well cause some surprise still, or even some question. Nearly every form of death had been executed on the adherents of the Covenant in Scotland, but there had been no case of sacking or drowning, though the idea might have been borrowed from the Grand Turk; and no high or subordinate inquisitor of the King had yet ordered the victims to be fixed to palisades in flood-tide. The conception formed at Wigtown, though not unknown to the law of Scotland, which had specially reserved death by drowning and burning to female

offenders of a supposed diabolic caste, was yet absolutely original and unprecedented in the affairs to which it was now applied. Without questioning the merit of this new idea, it may be charitably supposed that the sentence was pronounced without the intention of being carried into effect, and must have been of the nature of a *brutum fulmen* to extort a public submission from two eminent types of that combination of blameless character and calm sincerity of religious principle which the authorities most hated, and which they were now more determined than ever to break down.

One can imagine, indeed, what a coarse mind like that of Lagg would think of the ingenious device, by whomsoever devised, of stakes in the flood-tide. "A donnart auld wife and a saucy, hame-sick spandril o' a lass! They are no worth your

powder and shot, Major. Deed no! As for the gallows, let us keep them for the carls. It's grand to see the tykes dancing on the ropes, and hanging in the wun' like scarcraws for weeks thegither. But shegipsies, nae fear! Nae fear they'll tak' the aiths afore they swallow the saut water; and gin they dinna, e'en let them be drooned and be curse to them! Drooning is the easiest o' a' deaths for sanct or sinner, and ten times ower gude for ony Whug in Gallowa', male or female. I, Laird of Lagg, and ane o' the Sherradeputes of the county for this purpose, agree to the drooning in this case. It's no a bad idea, and if successfu' in this instance may introduce a mercifu' variation into our criminal procedure." The indefinite period allowed between sentence and execution, as well as immediate circumstances, showed that a public submis-

sion and probable release of the prisoners were at least entertained by the authorities. But speculative questions of this kind must be determined by the event of the romance, proceeding apparently according to the natural laws of history, though history of the wildest sort.

Glenvernoch arrived in the purlieus of the court only in time to learn the result of the trial, and, in his consternation and heartbreak, was surrounded by friendly sympathizers, who told him not to be too downcast, that much might happen before the sentence was executed, and that such a scandalous destruction of his daughter could neither be meant nor allowed. Behind these arose two sharply defined factions in the burgh and adjacent parishes, one of which swore that the Government had hit on the right plan now, the flood-tide would bring the

enemies to the Test, and the Test they would take; while the other contended that Margaret Lachlison and the brave young woman from the hills would never take the Test, whatever floods might pass over them, and that the Government would be miserably disappointed, as it had often been before. "The Drowning" among a large portion of the population was rapidly falling to the level of a coming spectacle, like a cockfight or a badger-baiting, in which the great point was to see which party had most game—the persecuted or the persecutors—and the uproar increasing so much daily that the authorities found themselves lashed onward by the enthusiasm of the swearing and betting party on their own side. Every morning the testing questions, and all the dread alternatives of the sentence, were put officially to the two prisoners in their

separate cells, without avail, and other agents and private friends were introduced at other hours with a similar purpose in view.

Glenvernoch sturdily declined entreaties from one side and another to coerce Margaret. He took opportunities afforded him of seeing her, and advised her to be discreet, not to go too far in her own way, and keep on the safe side, but he shrank from enjoining her to swear, reveal, or promise anything that was not in her own spirit. The farmer, despite his worldly feelings, had a profound reverence for his daughter; she was the star-point where his sagacious soul was brought into communion with the Eternal; and he knew her so much better than them all. If he attempted to lay an imperative order upon her, the attempt might fail, and a rupture of mutual sympathy would ensue; or

through the depth of her filial love and obedience it might succeed, and her future life become a moral and spiritual desolation. Besides, it was difficult in the short space of time for Glenvernoch, in the confusion of indictments, tests, oaths, and inquisitorial questions, to understand or to learn positively what his daughter was required to say or do to avert the dreadful tragedy within tide-mark.

Widow Lachlison had neither father nor husband, nor other male relative to visit her. But what from sympathy of over-zealous friends and loyal cozenage, she was at length induced to allow a petition for mercy in her behalf, which a notary drew up in his own terms, and which, though still extant in the records, neither bears her name nor mark, nor that of witnesses.

Sheriff Graham, immediately after this,

allayed somewhat the fever of Glenvernoch by assuring him there would be an appeal to Edinburgh before anything was done.

CHAPTER XII.

When will great men learn the misery that crowds
Their ante-chambers, value of their own word,
And merit of their suitors, disdaining
To palter in a double sense, or lie ?

Notes and Queries.

In the cumbered and tortuous execution of justice at this period, appeals of an official rather than of any legal character were frequently made from the provincial tribunals to the Court of High Commission—an enormous horn of power that had grown out of the more regular Court of Justiciary to dispose of ecclesiastical offenders. The question at issue being for the most part one of personal torture with the view of

forcing confessions, or a final sentence of more or less sweeping severity, the prisoners usually accompanied the appeal or reference to Edinburgh. In the present case the prisoners were detained at Wigtown, and escaped the possible horrors of the inquisition chamber; but it may be doubted whether it might not have been better for their earthly pilgrimage to have been transferred from the hands of the local tyrants. Their situation, however, now wore a hopeful aspect. The sentence passed upon them was stayed, would be reviewed by other heads than those who had conceived it, and was so novel and so horrible that it would most probably be disallowed.

Glenvernoch, with buoyant spirit, prepared for a journey to Edinburgh to plead in his own person the cause of Margaret. He armed himself with every kind of plea

and certificate he could think of. He sought the help of the Laird. Castle Stewart, himself under disfavour at the time, thought anything he could say would have little weight, might even do harm, but he would speak to the Earl, who had interest at Court; and Galloway wrote a letter to Queensberry, the Treasurer, and head of affairs in the capital, that the drowning process could in no event do any good, and that there was increasing concern in the matter. Glenvernoch, while trusting mainly to what he thought he could say himself in an audience with the King or the Viceroy, had various letters leading up to an audience, and among others one from the Curate of the parish. The day before his departure he went down to the Manse, taking with him the touching present of a ewe and lamb for the glebe. Mr. Colquhoun was delighted to be of any ser-

vice in a work of mercy, and sat down and wrote so fluently that by the time he had got to the end of his letter he had forgot the beginning, and after pleading unctuously for mercy to Margaret, finished in a pastoral lamentation what a trouble and vexation she had been to him, and how he had done everything in his power to reclaim her, though hitherto in vain. But the contents of this letter, delivered to him sealed like others, were unknown to Glenvernoch. The purpose of the writing, and the cordial manner of the writer, were enough for him, as an honest man among honest men.

Thus fortified, the farmer, after three days' riding, passed through the West Port of Edinburgh, and found himself next morning looking with wonder at the new Parliament House and the lofty and mystically-involved tenements of the High

Street and its flanking courts and lanes, with the usual depressing experience of a suitor absorbed in the magnitude of his own life-or-death concern, as if the whole world were heaving with it, and yet feeling how difficult it may be to obtain the faintest hearing of the great burden of his heart in this newly-revealed world of affairs.

Glenvernoch had made up his mind to go to the highest authority, and to no other. He would have liked to have seen King James himself, if that had been possible. But after much inquiry he had the happiness at length of being one of a crowd of waiters in the ante-chamber of Queensberry, to whom he presented his letters of introduction touching the immediate drowning of his daughter. The Treasurer broke two or three of the principal seals, and glanced at the contents. "Ah! yes.

I have heard of the case," said Queensberry. "I will read these letters carefully," when another name was announced, and Glenvernoch was expected to retire. "Will ye no say something about the case noo, my Lord? I'm Margaret's faither, and hae been a law-abiding man a' my days, paid cess and fines, and subsisted the King's troops; and ane doesna like to see their wean drooned under ane's e'en without ony just cause."

"True, true enough," said Queensberry with the overburdened air of a statesman who feels how hard it is to govern when the State has drifted away from all mooring of regular law. "I see ye are an honest man, and you may leave, relying that I will be your friend."

"Thank you, my Lord," said Glenvernoch, "but when will I hear? May I come back?"

"Come back! surely, come back any day," said Queensberry. "Yet stay, goodman, where are you to be found?"

And Glenvernoch gave his hostelry in the Grassmarket, which the secretary took down. It was a correct piece of business, but the farmer, without being able to connect cause and effect, became conscious during his stay in the city that one person, and always the same person, was hovering near him wherever he went.

The various departments of the Government in the capital at this juncture were labouring under much pressure of affairs, with the further aggravation of a strong current of political excitement. The new reign had brought a new master, diligent in business and fervent in spirit, serving his own cause with a personal urgency and command wholly unlike the indolent and malleable rule of his brother Charles. It

had become more and more certain that the kingdom would be invaded in course of the summer by armed forces from Holland, and the instructions from King James were of the most stringent character both as to military preparations and the suppression of all loose elements of disaffection likely to give support to the standard of rebellion. The Court of High Commission had its hands more than full of the disposal of ecclesiastical offenders, delivering the jails, and making away with the prisoners in one form or other, so that a wholesome terror might be inspired by the grating sounds of the machine of persecution again in full operation, and the stage be cleared for an expected haul of more important criminals. The Estates were also sitting, and were engaged in passing, on demand of the Commissioner of the King, not only a re-enactment of

the Test, but in briefer and sterner terms than ever an anti-Conventicle Act. Any persons preaching, or present as hearers, at house or field conventicles, were now to be punished "by death and confiscation of goods." These were all circumstances unfavourable to the suit of Glenvernoch.

Claverhouse, as one of the leading spirits of the War Department, was busy organizing troops, bringing down Atholemen and other Highlanders into the Campbell country, and, since there could be little doubt that Argyll would attempt to land on the west coast, had been conducting spasmodic cavalry reconnaissances through the western counties, hunting up alleged rebels and outlaws, and stopping means of communication between one district and another, and between the lowlands and Argyllshire. But as Sheriff-

Principal of Galloway, expecting ere long to be hereditary, he could not be inattentive to this appeal from his Sheriffdom, duly admonished thereupon as he was by his brother, the Sheriff-Depute. The implication of Lord Stair in the expedition of Argyll, forfeiture of his estates already in legal process, the royal castle of Lochnaw and its hereditaments suspended in the balance and sure to become the possession of the new hereditary Sheriff, whetted the ambition of this soldier of fortune to the keenest edge. Everything in the track of his ambition seemed of infinite importance.

Claverhouse, finding that Queensberry was favourable to a remission of the sentence on the two women at Wigtown, urged that they had been in unlawful correspondence with the rebels at the Caldons, even with Hay, his would-be assassin, and that they were obdurate conventiclers.

Any misplaced leniency in so aggravated a case would weaken his authority in the Sheriffdom and be an obstacle in the present business of disabling the invasion. There was an assurance at Wigtown that the trial by drowning, innocent enough in itself to life, as he insinuated, would elicit much useful information from the women, and probably their full submission to the tests, which would be a triumph to the cause of the Government, and a most useful sedative to the wild Covenanting feeling of the province. Of the substantial grounds of this Wigtown opinion there was evidence in the petition for mercy and recantation of the older and wiser of the condemned women, Margaret Lachlison, a document now in the hands of the Privy Council. When Queensberry demurred as to the public commotion and danger of such a trial by water, Claver-

house replied bluntly that to talk of commotion at Wigtown was absurd; but after the mutual smile that ensued, the gallant Sheriff more blandly suggested whether, if there should be any difficulty in the Council, it might not be better to order the women into Edinburgh than to respite or remit the sentence?

The question thus raised was bandied conversationally from Queensberry to other members of the Council, and some bigwigs of the Court of High Commission, with no more than the importance due to so small an affair—Claverhouse working busily the while between them. The crop of forfeitures in prospect dazzled the eyes of them all, and yet the risk of affairs turning out the other way was too great to acquit some remaining sense of responsibility. The result in the bustle of affairs was the entry of a minute in the records

of the Privy Council which has perplexed the historians, and to which the partisans on one side and the other have given the most conflicting interpretations.

The minute bore that the sentence on the two women, Margaret Wilson and Margaret Lachlison, was stayed till interposition be made with his most sacred Majesty for a royal remission. The date of the termination of the respite was left blank, after the manner of the sentence, and as might seem no more than was necessary to cover the indefinite period in which an advice of pardon could go from Edinburgh to London, return from London to Edinburgh with the Royal affirmation and seal of pardon, and thence be forwarded to Wigtown; or—it might cover a sinister design. But according to the preamble of the minute, the women were to be transferred from the charge of the magistrates

of Edinburgh to the authorities in Wigtown, as if the culprits were already in the Tolbooth of the capital, or were expected soon to be there.

This vague respite and promise of remission were contingent on interim measures to be adopted, and results expected with some confidence to be attained. Under this sweet prospect of pardon lay all the terrible apparatus of inquisition, the new invented at Wigtown, and the old in full working force at Edinburgh. Both were to be brought to bear on the affrighted imaginations and yielding consciences of the prisoners—nay, also on their persons—and the interposition for the royal remission was not to act out of the dead letters in which it was inscribed in the minute book of the Privy Council, until the women had recanted and taken the oaths. The tenour of the actual

instructions sent down to Wigtown can only be construed from what followed.

While this muffled and so aptly misleading judgment of the Council was being put together, Glenvernoch was multiplying his anxious attendances and importunities in the ante-chamber of Queensberry, day after day and hour after hour, with little avail. The Treasurer was so often in the Parliament House or in Council that he was seldom found at his own residence; and when he came the number of suitors was so great that Glenvernoch found himself in the background. On one of these occasions the farmer, bitterly envying those who had the *entrée*, noticed a martial figure in crimson coat and plumed helmet passing through the ante-chamber, and obtaining admission to the closet in precedence of all others. It occurred to Glenvernoch

that the keen, bold, and finely contemptuous face of that figure was a face he had seen before, and that it must be the same face and the same military-dilettante-electric person which he had once confronted on the bench at Wigtown. It must be Claverhouse.

When this light, heroic figure re-issued from the audience with the Lord Treasurer, Glenvernoch followed it, and seized it by the sleeve with a rather rough grip as it was jingling its high-heeled boots and silvered spurs along the corridor.

"Ye maybe dinna ken me," said the farmer, "but, if I'm no mista'en, ye're the Sherra o' Gallowa"—to which accosting Claverhouse returned a frightened stare, though to the farmer it seemed the politest form of introduction he could think of.

"Na, dinna be alairmed, Sherra. I'm

Glenvernoch, sir. Ye shurely ken me—the farmer in Penningham."

"Ha! ah! to be sure," replied Clavers, in one of his sudden volitions—"Wilson, Mr. Gilbert Wilson, ha! ah! to be sure, I remember you well. Uncommonly glad to see you, Glenvernoch."

"Weel, I'm happy we're freens thegither, Sherra," said the farmer, "for few freens hae I fund in this place, and ye're the best I could wush, being oor ain Sherra, for the business I am on here—this awfu' concern aboot my dochter Margaret."

"Your daughter is safe for the present," was the reply of Clavers. "She has to be brought to Edinburgh before anything be done. You had better stay here, where you will be sure to meet her, and see her brought out with a free royal pardon—ha-ah!" and, smiling and ha-haing, to the outer

door, Clavers hurried into the street and mounted amid an escort of troopers, leaving Glenvernoch, as his eyes followed the horsemen towards the Castle, in the deepest quandary he had experienced in the course of his life. "My dear Maggie was richt, aifter a'," was his final reflection. "Had the lairds kept the grun' under their feet, and we a' stood shouther to shouther, this bag o' wun' and feathers wad hae been settled mair cleverly."

The information that Margaret was to be brought into Edinburgh gave the distracted farmer a night of restless cogitation.

He looked at the portents of this change of measures on all sides, some of which seemed to lead to unknown depths of gloom, others into light and sunshine. He had learned from the casual talk of the capital that some confession or submission

was indispensable in such cases to any hope of mercy or release, and in the cynical atmosphere of a long record of arbitrary power had found himself shaken in what he deemed the fundamental strength of his case, viz. — What had Margaret done to harm a neighbour or the public peace? He had also heard of some petition having come from Margaret Lachlison, and that it was believed to be weighing in favour of both prisoners. The order to remove them to Edinburgh might possibly be a sign of clemency. Yet the broodings of Glenvernoch, whether swaying to the desponding or hopeful side, only increased his determination to see Queensberry, and learn the actual disposals from the Chief of the Government.

The Lord Treasurer he could not see after repeated attempts, but flinging the hitherto potent usher out of the way, he

entered the closet in defiance of rules of precedence, and there found his Lordship's secretary. On that official Glenvernoch made so powerful an impression that he was only induced to withdraw on overflowing assurances that his plaint would be immediately attended to. If not that evening, the secretary would certainly put it first on my lord's business next morning, and the farmer would have my lord's answer in writing in the course of the day. Glenvernoch was satisfied with this arrangement, and, on passing out from the cabinet, repelled some sauciness of the usher with—"Gae wa, lacquey, and attend to your business."

Next evening a messenger delivered to Glenvernoch a sealed missive, which bore that the secretary had been directed by my Lord Queensberry to inform him that the execution of the sentence of death at

Wigtown had been arrested in the hope of obtaining a Royal pardon, whereof there were good grounds of hope in the petition presented by the older of the two women, and advising him to use every diligence as a prudent father to promote the clement design of the Privy Council, and remove all danger from his house and family. This read to Glenvernoch like a confirmation of his most favourable views of the course which events had taken. If the intrepid firmness of Margaret occurred to him, he concluded that his daughter would be prepared to do what the good old widow of Kirkinner had done. The advice of Claverhouse to stay in Edinburgh might be well meant, but he did not trust it, and preferred to follow the suggestion of Queensberry, and return home as fast as horse's legs could carry him, convinced that he had the safety of Margaret in his keeping.

CHAPTER XIII.

Here's the smell of the blood still; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.

Lady Macbeth.

Meanwhile Claverhouse had set out from the capital on one of his raids through the West country. His dragoons had for some days been scouring the moorlands from Glasgow to Dumfries, and the military tribunals in the towns where a few companies of soldiers were posted had seldom been more busy in their calling or more hot and arbitrary in their procedure. To sweep away all fugitives from the stern justice of the period who might rally

round the standard of Argyll, or be a means of communication between the invaders and their sympathizers in the south-western counties, and to spread a general terror among the whole population by the remorseless example made of any number of blameless but unyielding persons, so as to paralyze by anticipation the threatened rebellion, appears to have been the order which issued from the military councils at Edinburgh.

On the 1st of May, John Brown, "the Christian carrier" of Lesmahagow, found cutting turf in his own peat-moss, was shot down in presence of his wife and child by the hand of Clavers himself, none of his troopers being instantly prepared for so brutal a murder. On the 5th of May, two artisans were brought before a military tribunal of fifteen in Ayrshire, and in a few hours were convicted, hanged,

and buried under the gallows. On the 11th of May, three men of the same class were arrested near Glasgow, brought before the military tribunal of the district, asked whether they would pray for King James the Seventh?—a question which brought the political and religious sentiments and differences of the time into such fusion that only an utter desperado, careless alike of both politics and religion, could hope to avoid the snare—and on being unable to answer the question in direct affirmative without explanation, were condemned. The three men were blindfolded, ordered to kneel down, and a squad of musketeers finished this act of military jurisprudence. On the same day, Clavers, having left the tribunals in this active exercise behind him, was met by the Laird of Westerhall as he rode round at the head of his troop into Annandale. The Laird

had a prisoner, a lad called Andrew, and an alarming story to tell about Andrew. One of the "outlaws" in sickness had found shelter in the house of Andrew's mother, a widow in Eskdalemuir, and had died under the hospitable roof, to which this unfortunate accident of death, so difficult to be concealed by a respectable widow woman, had attracted the eyes of the Laird of Westerhall. He had ridden in haste to the place, had dug the corpse out of the grave where it had been buried overnight, had pulled down the house of the widow in terms of the Act of Privy Council against harbourers of rebels, had driven her and the younger children into the fields, and carried off Andrew as a trophy sure to commend his zeal to the Government. The Laird demanded from Claverhouse the instant execution of Andrew; but shaken in nerve, if not in

conscience, by his own recent murder of John Brown, Claverhouse had a repugnance at this moment to shooting in cold blood. He would have preferred to have a military tribunal between him and instant execution. Westerhall, moreover, was one of the renegades from the Presbyterian cause, for whom the gallant cavalier had a strong though politicly concealed contempt. "Test him," said Westerhall, "and you will see what a hardened rebel he is." Andrew would yield to no test, would not answer a word, and evinced only dislike of his questioners, and a wild anger as he thought of his mother. The carbines were ordered to be presented. "Pull the bonnet over your face, boy," commanded Claverhouse. "Na," replied Andrew, "I'll no pu' the bonnet ow'r my face. I can look you, and better than you, in the face." Westerhall gave a truculent

look to his chief. "Since ye are a blade of that sort," cried Clavers, looking in turn to the firing party, "you must go to the devil;" and a flash from the carbines laid the brave Andrew dead on the ground. This occurred on the eleventh of May.

And on the same eleventh of May, Margaret Wilson and Margaret Lachlison were led forth to the drowning in flood-mark at Wigtown.

CHAPTER XIV.

To do or not to do has tried the strongest nerves ;
But "to be or not to be" is the worse question.
Inquisitor.

It must be allowed there was a certain delicacy of feeling on the part of Claverhouse in directing his course on this occasion, somewhat wide of the mysterious tragedy in progress at the head town of his Sheriffdom. He had a multitude of affairs to attend to. He had his own personal interest to consider, and he had the general commission of the Government to execute, which was now chiefly terrorization against the impending invasion of Argyll. Properly speaking, on this latter

duty, he should have held his route somewhat nearer the western coast than Eskdale, should have passed through Sanquhar, ransacked the defiles of the Nith and the hills of Penpont so full of Covenanters' hiding-places, and established himself two or three days before the eleventh in Dumfries, whence he could have controlled the course of events in his own official domain of Galloway. But a certain awe of mingled hope and fear, a ghostly rustling of leaden and silken wings, brooded over the tidal experiment at Wigtown. The victims were pure and blameless women—one a virgin in her teens, the other an aged widow full of honour from her youth upward as now full of years—of humble rank both, but both high, high in character. Weary of this easy but fruitless task of hunting outlaws, and shooting and hanging defenceless in-

tercommuners with outlaws, Claverhouse would fain have struck a mortal blow at this thrice-panoplied enemy of character, by far the stoutest and least vulnerable enemy, as he had found, in his wild and fiery path. With Margaret Wilson, the upright but artless maiden of the hills, and Margaret Lachlison, the sainted widow of the plains, as his pupils, clinging gracefully to his sword-belt, what a moral, what a new and needed glory would surround him. It would stop the mouths of all Presbyterian gainsayers in Galloway, and it would vindicate his counsels at Edinburgh. The two women would certainly yield when confronted with the rushing tide of the Solway. His brother David, so sly and ecclesiastic in temperament, would see to that. He would know to a hair's-breadth the dividing line between the gasp of life and the gasp of submission.

Yes! The women would surely yield! And this hope was so sweet to Claverhouse that he would fondle it, and take a long detour by Eskdale and Annan water-foot, unwilling that the illusion should be suddenly broken, and willing that the happier event should reach him in due course. For, after all, the hope might be an illusion. The two Margarets might not yield, and their drowning to death become an accomplished fact, which the whole world would denounce as a monstrous and lawless crime, compassed by means no less monstrous and lawless than the crime itself. But even in that case, Claverhouse would be well to be at a distance from the scene, so that the fair fame of his Hereditary Sheriffship might not be more than necessarily tarnished.

The two condemned women, from the time the elder had been induced to allow

a petition for mercy and forgiveness, were not only lodged in the same prison of Wigtown, but were committed to the same cell—the condemned cell—differing so much from the general thieves' hole that it was really a select apartment on the upper floor, in the centre of the building, where the light of day only penetrated at second-hand from the staircase, and a grated opening in the ceiling through which uncertain rays straggled down from the tower. They were allowed to have their Bibles, and they were allowed to see nearest relatives and selected friends. The goodwife of Glenvernoch came to see her loved daughter with broken heart, but with a cheery voice, telling Margaret that her father had gone to Edinburgh, and that her release was sure. The two lay clasped in each other's bosom, to the utmost limit

of the jailer's orders. The daughter of Widow Lachlison also came, weeping, sobbing, crying, an image of inconsolable distress, to pour her vexation more than any comfort into the heart of her mother. "What ails ye, hinny?" said the serene old Christian. "What maitters to an auld body like me, with ae foot deep in the grave, how sune, this year or the next, the day or the morn, the ither may follow? Comfort ye, hinny, comfort ye. To you as to me the chief concern is the heavenly world." It had doubtless been judged that in the association in the same cell the older would bring the younger prisoner to a mood of meek compliance, and that affecting interviews, with heart-broken and sobbing relatives, would result in a complete submission. But the visitors were surprised at their composure and oneness

of mind, their air of devout and resigned preparation for a death which they neither feared nor were ashamed of.

The pressure came when the tenour of the instructions from Edinburgh had to be broken to the prisoners. The Sheriff-Depute took this duty upon himself in the first instance. He entered alone with the jailer into the cell. The Privy Council, he said to the women, had resolved in its great clemency to interpose with his Majesty for their full pardon. But to this end they had a simple duty to perform on their part. Neither of them had yet taken the Test, which all the great men and nearly all the commons of the county had taken. They could have no scruple in doing what their neighbours, gentle, and simple, had done, and "what your father has done," added the Sheriff-Depute, saying more than was strictly true, and fixing his eyes on the

younger Margaret. Besides the Test there was only the new oath of abjuration, rendered more necessary now than ever by a proclamation of the rebels declaring war against the King, and the assassination of his loyal subjects. No good woman could refuse to wash her hands of such proceedings. "It is your petition, Mrs. Lachlison, that has opened this happy door of escape to you and your companion here." "My petition!' replied Mrs. Lachlison, "surely I didna promise to come under ony tests that are no in conscience. Wherein I may hae offended I ask for pardon, and will promise a peaceable life, but I'll no falsely swear or forswear mysel' against onybody." The Sheriff-Depute conjured the prisoners to think seriously of what he had told them; their lives were hanging in the balance; and they must beware of stopping the Royal mercy, and rushing to a death

which would make them objects of derision to the whole country.

"What are a' thae tests and oaths, Margaret, they make sae muckle o'?" asked the elder of the younger prisoner when the Sheriff-Depute and the jailer had retired, and the bars of the iron door had clanked into their sockets behind them. "My auld head is getting confused about thae worldly things. The Test, as far as I can mind, was a disavooal o' the Presbyterian doctrine and worship, and then it was altered and was an oath to follow the curate and the new order o' things in the Kirk, which I could never find in my heart to do. But I could retire peaceably within my ain house, and let the laws and the times gang by. What are we noo asked to do, my dearie? Ye're sae like a lamb o' the flock compared wi' me—and I'se no say I should like to be

drooned afore a' the folk, and be in the wrang."

"Their testings and oaths are snares," replied the maiden, "snares of the Evil One, crawling like spiders' webs over the conscience, and entangling deeper and deeper, till a' sense of duty and charity is lost. The oaths have done no good to them whae have taken them, and they are meant only to kill, and to cut off even from a cup of cold water, those who have done the swearers nae harm. For my pairt, I'll take nane o' their oaths. They maun show what ill I hae done, and condemn me on that. I am in their hands. They may droon me, or burn me, or torture me. But I would rather die, good mother," continued Margaret, bending with a bursting heart over her aged companion in suffering, "than live as thae tyrants would force me from my lips to live."

The condemned women were shortly brought before the petty council of war, usually held several times a week at this period in Wigtown, where they had to undergo a much rougher expostulation, ending in ferocious menace. Lagg and Winram exhausted their vocabulary of terror in describing the horrors of death by slow drowning. They would be allowed to sink under the tide, and raised above it only to sink under it again and again, until submission to lawful authority were wrung from them. While Sheriff Graham, as some relief to the dreadful pictures of his colleagues, dwelt on the blessings of pardon and deliverance, and the joy they would give to their friends and the whole country by a timely recantation of their seditious doctrines. But the two women stood silent with bent heads before this truculent tribunal.

"Ye obstinate auld sinner," at length roared Lagg, "will you no speak? The thumbkins or the lichted matches atween your taes would mack you skraigh nae doot. But ye hae waur to suffer than that afore a' is done! And you, ye limmer," addressing the young prisoner, "what hae ye to say for yoursel' that ye should follow sic a doited example?"

"I hae already said a'," replied Margaret. "What ill hae we dune to deserve this abuse?"

"What ill have ye done, ye whimperin' limmer," grinned Lagg, "is that a' ye ken? When ye'er doon amang the fish and the crawling beasts o' the saut water ye'll find oot what ill ye hae done, and cry to us for mercy when too late, ye hardened young gipsy."

Margaret looked in succession to her judges, without answering; and on

the rebuke of innocence thus conveyed the prisoners were ordered to be removed.

The unyielding spirit of the condemned women, while it inflamed the angry and vengeful passions, disturbed considerably the self-confidence of the officials at Wigtown. They had misgivings as to whether the trial by drowning would have the success they must have most desired. This calm and imperturbable demeanour of passive resistance might be superior even to the horrors of the floodtide; and they were perplexed and dismayed at the consequences if the challenge they had given to the consciences of too feeble women should be defeated in open day before the eyes of the public. But they had advanced too far for their pride and lust of power to recede. There was the hope that the actual process would prove infinitely more stringent than any mere threats of it, and there was always

the comforting argument of Lagg that, if they did drown, who was to blame but themselves? Certainly it would only be two victims more to a multitude of others. So they made preparations to make the process as effective as possible, and found their furious resolution carrying them onward with a fatal momentum.

Some dependence was placed on the last official interview in the condemned cell when it was necessary to call upon the prisoners to prepare for death. The Sheriff-Depute performed this duty with much solemnity, but with no further result than to hear from both with one voice, "We are prepared." Margaret asked that they might have writing materials and lights, in which she was indulged, the Sheriff-Depute asking in turn whether they would like to see any of their friends. Margaret said she would like to see her mother or

any one from Glenvernoch. The interest of the countryside, despite the secrecy of the authorities, was now deeply aroused by the pending event, and many had come forward beseeching to see the prisoners, some of whom Sheriff Graham was well disposed to admit into the cell. Among these was Picardy.

"Mr. Picardy," said the jailer, in one of his entrances, more than half-closing the iron door behind him, "wishes to see you for a few minutes."

"No! no!" cried Margaret vehemently. "Has my mother not come? Where is my father?"

But Picardy pressed in.

"Mistress Margaret, do hear me, and—"

"Out of my sight!" cried Margaret, turning her back on the intruder, and burying her face in her hands, with a shock of mingled scorn and pity which

caused her to tremble from head to foot.

Picardy, aghast at this reception, turned to Mrs. Lachlison, and would have spoken.

"Na, Tam! ye needna speak," interrupted the widowed dame. "I never liked thee or thy ways, and noo less than ever. Gang your wa'—seek repentance for your sins—and may God forgie ye for bringing that queenly lassie and me to this sair end."

And Picardy slunk out of the prison.

Margaret, after a painful interval, sat down with her usual calmness and deliberation, to write a letter to her father and mother, in which she assured them of her deep sense of God's love, her entire resignation to His disposal; and entered into her reasons for refusing to save her life by taking the oaths of abjuration and conformity, adding that she had a strong faith that her separation from them in this

world, however painful, would be blessed to them, and would bring them peace—the peace of God which passes understanding. In the course of this writing, the jailer intimated that a serving-man had come from Glenvernoch, and had permission to see her. "Oh! how glad I am," she said, "it is Sandy. Tell him I will be ready to see him directly."

Mrs. Wilson, torn with anxiety at the non-arrival of Glenvernoch from Edinburgh and the urgency of affairs at Wigtown, was utterly overcome. She had swooned and re-swooned all that morning, and had only breath enough, when she found her journey impossible, to order Sandy to carry her love to Margaret, and to bring back her last word. Margaret, having finished her letter, drew from her purse a ring and showed it to her fellow-prisoner. "I would like to return it to Martha."

"Yes, surely," replied the old woman, her dim eyes gleaming with a brighter sparkle. "Mistress Martha is worthy, very worthy, and it will help to comfort her saddened heart when a's by."

Margaret having enclosed the ring in the letter to her father and mother, enjoining them to deliver it to Martha, or, failing her, to her father, Sir David, gave her reception to Sandy with a smiling affection which contrasted strongly with the sad and downcast spirit of that faithful dependent of the farm.

The last night in a condemned cell, whether the inmates be guilty or innocent, reconciled or irreconciled to the awful doom of the morrow, must be always solemn and striking. Some can eat heartily and sleep soundly on such occasions, but these must be exceptions. The two here before the reader had some talk about their toilets

next day. They then read the Bible and prayed together, till Margaret urged her companion to try to take some hours of sleep, and the infirmity of age threw the old woman into a slumber as deep and quiet as that of a child. But Margaret found she could not sleep, and that her only rest from the rapid emotions of a youthful heart was in reading her loved passages of Scripture and in lifting her soul to Heaven, which she continued to do till the morning light had paled the flame of the prison taper.

CHAPTER XV.

'Tis true ; 'tis pity ; and pity 'tis, 'tis true.
Shakespeare.

And now the appointed day of execution had arrived. There was high tide in the bay about two hours after meridian; and the early hours of a bright May morn, with fleecy clouds folding thickly up behind the sun to seaward, passed quietly on, till a crowd began to gather about the tolbooth. Outcast boys and rough lads; poor and half-naked women, some with infants in their arms, and followed by squalid children without their fathers; sturdy mendicants of both sexes; and a gang of gipsies, who

had encamped overnight outside the burgh roods, contributed to a motley throng. Among the rest came half a dozen hags, hirpling from their lairs in Wigtown and adjacent parishes, some leaning doubled on their staffs, and others less infirm, with bare and bony arms, which they brandished as they spoke like tinkers. They were of the class suspected of witchcraft, and inspiring a horror in the public mind, partly the result of their own connivance, and partly of the superstition of the time. These, known to each other, formed a group by themselves, and soon began to attract the attention of the crowd, as it wearied of looking up to the windows of the tolbooth and the stanchioned loopholes of the cells.

"God-an-apes be praised!" said one of the fiercest of the hags, "this day will show hoo the sancts endure the water sae aften

thrown owre the heads o' puirer and humbler folk."

"Ye may weel say sae, Nanse," added another. "They haud that we're leagued wi' Satan, but they hae fund there are mair than yae Satan in the warl', and whan a' the deils are fechtin' we'll see whilk is the strangest. Ha! ha! we'll see, Nanse. The true Deil looks after his ain bairns. Auld Widow Lachlison is na likely to mak' mickle spang in the tide."

"Fie for shame, Tibbie," replied a third, "ye that has been sae aften afore the Presbytery! And can ye say that the gude woman o' Kirkinner was ony time your enemy?"

"That is richt, Malzie, atweel-a-wat," said another of the crones; "I'm sure we can only peety thae puir craturs in the hole. They are sae like oorsels—especially the fair young woman, that has dune nae harm."

"Haud your idle tongues, ye senseless jauds!" cried Nanse. "Dae ye mean to say that oor kingdom is divided? Wha has glowered on us mair than Glenvernoch and ither prood hill farmers?"

"What do ye ken, beldame, aboot Glenvernoch?" said a stalking leader of the gipsies. "What stranger has gone to his door without bite and sup, and fair protection on the road?"

"Slave of a foreign deevil!" hissed the hag, shaking her fist with rage towards the gipsy. "Daur ye to meddle wi' us in our ain country? I will draw a ring and set ye at defiance—*Sallah!*" (curse you); at which last word from his own lingo the gipsy scowled and shuddered. The hag was proceeding in an incantation when she was knocked over by a sudden rush of lads from the crowd to the scene of dispute, and blows would probably have ensued but

for the timely appearance of the town-sergeant and his guard, the latter much stronger on this occasion than usual.

Every few minutes brought fresh arrivals —hedgers, ditchers, and horse-coupers, keepers from the kennels, and grooms from the stables of the country-side, and young gallants, scarcely more civilized, who looked upon the barbarous proceeding of the day as a sport, and had laid bets on its issue. At length a party of dismounted, but well-armed troopers, under Strachan, marched from their quarters, and, clearing the crowd from the jail door, took position. These were followed, after a brief interval by the Sheriff-Depute and his colleague, Lagg, the Sheriff-Clerk, and other officials, attended by Winram and a small party of horse. The acting Chief Magistrate of the burgh had already placed himself at the head of the town guard. The Provost,

Coltran, was at Edinburgh, in discharge of his duty in Parliament as member for the burgh, and it was in these absences of his civic chief that the Bailie swelled with most importance of office. He looked this morning like a man who had a great duty to perform. But one was missing from his side. Picardy was nowhere to be seen.

The arrival before the tolbooth of the high authorities and their mounted escort was a signal of the expected procession. The usual commotion ran through the crowd when there is a straining for places. The more respectable burgesses advanced from their door-steps. Wistful eyes of women and children looked out from the opened upper windows. And country-people from a distance with the same mind —unwilling to show sympathy with the grim procedure, yet unable to restrain their curiosity—issued timidly from the

private houses, the inns, and shops in which they had screened themselves. All—good, bad, or indifferent, by whatever feelings moved—were eager to see the two fated women, of blameless lives, as they came forth from the prison, and passed on to a weird, savage, and unheard-of judgment.

Presently they were seen issuing from the jail hand in hand, and holding each a Bible, in the garb in which they were taken, but relieved; clean and modestly adorned as they would have appeared on their own hearths—the snowy-white round their necks and bosoms chastening the rising blush of pallid countenances, on which rested the sweet calm of youthful and of aged beauty. The roughest of the multitude were hushed into breathless silence as they took their place in the line of procession between the hangman and the town-sergeant. Neither surprise nor con-

sternation appeared on either of the two faces. Their eyes never rose from the ground. One would have said that they were prepared, indeed, for any doom, and that from that moment a retraction of their testimony was impossible.

The order having been given to move forward, on went the soldiers and the authorities, the town-guard and the mounted escort, along the lower end of the square, and through narrow lanes between hawthorn hedges white with scented blossom, and down slopes green with young corn—the whole rabble of arabs, mendicants, hags, gipsies and gamblers, now broke loose, rushing pell-mell before and behind them—to the deep bed of the Bladenoch, over which the flow-tide was now coursing in rapid ripples. Such a sorry spectacle has surely been seldom seen under the blue vault of heaven.

Advancing along the river side, the procession stopped where two heavy stobs of timber had been driven into the ground close on the brink of the flood, and coils of rope lay round them. Here the soldiers were formed into a wide semi-circle, enclosing the prisoners, the officers of law, and the chief authorities — forcing the rabble back on a higher bank and on the sands, which would be washed by the tide before the ebb, but which were still dry.

The prisoners are told that they will have a few moments for their last devotions. And now look round and see what clusters of people have assembled. Those who stood at a distance from the tolbooth have moved down by other ways than the official procession. They are standing in lingering groups on the slopes, always advancing a little nearer. Some are

throwing up their arms, some are dropping upon their knees in prayer. Over on the other side of the river, the green meadows and shelly strand of Baldoon are dotted with country-people, loitering but anxious, and converging closer and closer to the semicircle of buff and scarlet, the rushing tide in the river bed, and the stobs of timber. The two victims have bowed down behind the stobs. They have read silently in their Bibles, have chanted lowly together some verses of a psalm, and have each in succession offered up a brief prayer in such meekness of spirit and such devout submission to the Divine will, that all within their audience are moved, and some even of the soldiers shed tears; while the town officers, under the superintendence of the Bailie, have been unwinding and preparing the ropes.

Winram, as chief military officer, and on

the theory, probably, that the two women were engaged in Bothwell, Aird's Moss, and other armed rebellions as indicted, and were thus in reality prisoners of war, gave all the commands.

He orders the elder prisoner to be tied to one of the stobs and committed to the tide. Tied, the old woman is lifted down over the bank into the water, and pushed with the halberds of the town-sergeant and the constables to the utmost length of the cord bound round her frail body. She is soon up to the neck in water, and immediately in drowning agonies. Margaret Wilson, while in the act of being bound, is allowed to be the witness of the helpless sufferings of her aged companion. Sheriff Graham seizes the opportunity of asking whether the sight does not frighten her, and bring her at the last moment to reason and submission? "It is not she," replied the

resigned and unbending maiden, "but Christ that is suffering in her. The sight should frighten you more than it frightens me." When they all looked again to the tide nothing was seen of the drowning woman but a tuft of grey hair and a hand clasping a Bible. So rapidly had the aged dame been sucked down by the tide that it seemed from the blank faces of the officials that a part of the programme had been forgotten.

The young woman of eighteen was then pushed into the depths of the tide by the same process as the old woman of more than threescore years. Taller and stronger, the young Margaret did not succumb to the waves so rapidly as the old Margaret; and yet, courting a death inevitable, what more could she do than the corpse sinking deeper and deeper beside her.

Lifted off her feet by the tide, becoming

every moment deeper and more rapid in its race, she falls backward, and her head tosses wildly on the waves. Once more she regains a footing, and stands erect, gasping, and looking upward to the skies; when a serving-man rushes through the semi-circle of the soldiers to the bank, and cries, "Oh Margaret! dear Margaret! pray for the king." The voice of Sandy, with its home associations, turned the eyes of Margaret on the faithful servant of her father. "Will ye no pray for the king, Margaret?" he asked, stretching out his hands towards her with trembling eagerness. "I pray for the king as for all men," was her reply. "She has said it! she has said it!" exclaimed Sandy with enthusiasm, as he turned and bent on his knee before Winram and the Sheriff; and shouts of "She agrees! she agrees! save her! save her!" escaped at the same moment from

many of the onlookers. "Haul her out," said Winram to the constables, and the half-drowned victim, on rising out of the water from this rude process, staggered and fell forward in a swoon on the bank.

The whole scene was now solemn beyond description. The sky had lost its morning brightness. The white fleecy clouds, condensing, had gradually become grey and purply, and a floating mass of inky vapour veiled the sun. The commotion of the spectators was extreme. Many had fallen on their knees in overpowering gratitude to Heaven for the deliverance of the pure-minded but fiery-hearted maiden. Many others, less assured of the result, were running to and fro, and pressing towards the central spot.

"You agree to take the test and oath of abjuration," said Winram, as soon as Margaret showed signs of returning sensibility.

She looked to him, with a grave and wistful look, but did not answer yea or nay. "You must swear it," he added, "or you must return instantly to the water. Do you swear it?"

"Cruel men!" she replied, slowly collecting all her energy of mind and touching expression. "I'm weary o' ye. Let me go to my Saviour and my Judge, by whom ye shall be judged."

"S'death! Unfortunate! She must go back into the tide," hissed the Major, with bitter chagrin, and turning on his heel like one who had been smitten.

"Ye'll hae to tak' anither drink wi' the partans, my young leddy," remarked the town-sergeant, catching with brutal humour what he deemed the spirit of his superior, as the hangman and he shoved the victim down into the tidal stream now washing up on the bank, and

half-a-dozen halberds were again pointed at her head. A few dizzy steps, and the limp and shivering figure of the Virgin-Martyr was caught by the flood, and sank under the swelling waves without a struggle.

CHAPTER XVI.

Hast thou not mark'd, when o'er thy startled head
Sudden and deep the thunder peal has roll'd,
How, when its echoes fell, a silence dead
Sunk on the wood, the meadow, and the wold ?
The rye-grass shakes not on the sod-built fold,
The rustling aspen leaves are mute and still,
The wall-flower waves not on the ruin'd hold,
Till, murmuring distant first, then near and shrill,
The savage whirlwind wakes, and sweeps the groaning hill.

Lord of the Isles.

A WAIL of anguish rose from the multitude near the water edge, and spread along the slopes. The issue of what they had come to see was no longer uncertain. The more respectable fled from the scene, as if by being present or by waiting longer they

would share the guilt of a foul and tragic crime. Not so the active perpetrators. They stood some moments, as if turned into stone, gazing on the blank waters, each afraid to be first to break the silence. "It was their ain blame," at length said Lagg, with the usual courage of his peculiar opinions, but with less of his usual profaneness—"their ain blame, and it will be a lesson to the Whugs."

Winram, as some heavy drops of rain began to fall, put his soldiers again in line, and having given orders for the removal of the bodies, the oversight of which he committed to the Bailie, greatly to the chagrin and annoyance of that pompous but servile busybody, the military and the dignitaries marched back into the burg, drawing the rabble after them as before, but now under the heaviest downpours of rain "in any man's memory," as the contemporary

Evelyn in his diary has said of a similar storm in a wicked age, when the commotions of nature appear to have been singularly suggestive, to courtiers as well as plebeians, of the judgment of Heaven. Before the cavalcade and its company of foot had reached the square, they were drenched to the skin; the square itself was silent and deserted, save the thudding of heavy rain, and the running of water. The rabble had even melted away. Nothing was left but a wretched official and military scarecrow, as like a thing drowned as any corpse dragged from the bottom of the tide could be.

With no intent to harrow the feelings of the reader over the dead bodies, a few words must be added as to the duty laid upon the Bailie. The acting Chief Magistrate found himself not only detained some hours under an increasing tempest of rain and

wind, but attended by the worst ghouls of the rabble, among whom were the hags Nanse and Tib, who had so many grudges against the magistracy that they now spent their curses and sibillations chiefly on all who had been engaged in that day's wickedness, and gave a lead to the spirit of the other ghouls. The town-constables themselves became mutinous. The dead bodies of the victims when fished out of the tide in their calm and sleep-like rest were a terrible accusation to all in the living unrest, discomfort, and discordant passion in which they found themselves. The Bailie cowered and trembled hideously, losing all command of himself and of others. The orders were that the bodies should be conveyed to the jail. But no preparation had been made for the conveyance, and much time was lost in improvising what was deemed a decent

arrangement. The bearers took the shortest way, and on toiling up the ascent past the churchyard to the tolbooth were met by streams of water rushing down the strand from the square, heavy falls of rain from the heavens, gusts of wind, flashes of lightning, and peals of thunder, enough to arrest a much more heroic band. They stopped in weariness and in affright. The Bailie at this juncture was found to have disappeared—was supposed to have been drowned or to have drowned himself, or to have been struck dead by a flash of lightning—and the general instinct was to lay down the dead bodies, and each living soul to flee to its own refuge, when the town-sergeant, who had been most brutal at the drowning, proved most valiant at the burial. "Stap till I come back," he said, and ran over to the sexton's. And so it happened that on a

night when the whole community was practically dead, every door barred, every window closely shuttered, and the raging elements without lent additional horror to shame and consternation within, the remains of the two martyr-women of Wigtown — "rebels and excommunicates"— were laid in the porch of the parish church.

"Where is my father?" loudly cried Margaret, on the night before the execution.

Glenvernoch, on the night after the execution, riding hastefully from Edinburgh, passed through the gate to his farmhouse in fond belief of the safety of his daughter. Yet he had not passed more than a few paces along the scarped roadway of his old familiar homestead till he was impressed with a foreboding of evil. The silence, the darkness, the utter quietude and inanimateness of this scene of his heart,

disturbed the hopeful flow of spirit in which he had urged his horse over more than a hundred miles. The happy tidings of which he deemed himself the bearer not only gave speed to his journey, but clothed with warm imagination what his reception at home would be. He thought his sheep-dogs would meet him with their usual phrase of recognition, that Sandy would be ready to take his horse, that his wife and daughter Agnes would be at the door with lights to welcome him, and that he would pour into their hearts a joy they had not felt since he had left them. How different! No voice, canine or human, greeted him as he rode into the street between the out-houses and in-house, nor was light visible from any window or aperture of the old thatched building, distinct in outline as it was under a starry May-night sky.

Glenvernoch threw himself from his horse at the door, lifted the latch and passed through a dark corridor into the kitchen, where he saw a figure under the chimney, bending with elbow on knee over a smouldering fire, its fingers lost amid matted and wildly disordered hair, apparently asleep.

"Sandy! Sandy!" cried the farmer, "what are ye dreaming aboot?" At which well-known voice the figure started to its feet, and appeared to be fully awake.

"Whar's the mistress?—whar's Agnes?" inquired Glenvernoch. "I hae sic gude news I didna expeck to find you a' sleeping this gate. Whar's the gudewife? I hae Maggie's pardon here in my pouch."

"Oh! maister, maister! what are ye saying?" replied Sandy, throwing his arms round Glenvernoch's shoulders, and looking up into his face.

"Tell me, Sandy, my man—tell me a'," queried Glenvernoch, with a quaking heart, and with bended body.

"Oor dear Maggie, maister, was drooned in the Blednoch yesterday!'

. . . . . .

CHAPTER XVII.

Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor ;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore,
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.

Milton.

The tragic event, which brings our narrative to a close, has not ceased for two centuries to move the pity and horror of mankind; but it was half-forgotten for a time in the excitement of joyous events that soon followed. It marked the culmination of the dreary reign of religious persecutions

in Scotland. The expedition of Argyll was sailing through the Pentland Firth on the day when this spectacle of cruelty was exhibited on the shores of the Solway; and like the cotemporary expedition of Monmouth to the West of England, came to speedy grief and ruin. Much noble blood was subsequently spilled on the scaffolds both of Edinburgh and London. But the drowning at Wigtown closed the wilder savagery with which the ruling powers had pursued the farmers, peasants, and artisans of Scotland for nearly a quarter of a century. The tyranny had reached its full tide in the death of the Maiden-Martyr of Glencree. The cup of popular suffering was full to overflowing; and in the pure spirit of this tender heroine the Sword of the persecutors was to find the celestial metal on which its edge was to be turned, and its blade to shiver into rust and ashes for

ever. Within three years of the female martyrdom at Wigtown the Revolution had diffused general joy throughout the kingdom, and was nowhere more welcome than in Galloway.

On a day in June a squadron of men-of-war and a great fleet of transports, to the wonder of the inhabitants on the shores and along the headlands of Lochryan, furled their sails and drew to anchor in that secure Galloway harbourage within thirty miles of the Irish shore. A pinnace was seen to dart from the flagship, bearing the Royal Standard, and bearing William III. for the first time to Scottish soil, where he established his head-quarters for a few days in Castle Kennedy. The new King was on his way to fight and gain the battle of the Boyne. An epidemic had broken out in the fleet, and it was necessary to restore a better sanitary condition before

passing into the camp already sorely thinned by pestilence. Here a captain of the Dutch Blues, who had already gained the notice and favour of his Sovereign, obtained eight days' leave of absence, with injunctions to rejoin the army in Ulster. The delighted officer took horse and rode rapidly to Baldoon, where his arrival was unexpected, though letters many had recently passed between him and the fair inhabitant of the stately mansion on the Bay of Wigtown. The arrival of the fleet in Lochryan was an accident which the impetuosity of the lover turned to account. The announcement of "William Hay" sent a thrill of pleasure through the hearts of all the inmates of the castle, and soon brought Martha herself to his arms, attended by her father, who in the joy of the young people seemed to recover some portion of a long-lost happiness.

Martha was attired in mourning, and wore, as her only piece of jewellery, the ring, which had passed through the hands of a traitor, through a jail and a condemned cell, and a personal suffering that, in contrast with her own marvellous deliverance, had never ceased to weigh all the more heavily on her spirit, even in these happier days.

Hay, on his almost hopeless flight from Galloway to the east coast of Scotland, succeeded in finding passage by a vessel to the north of France, whence he pushed his way as rapidly as he could under many difficulties into Holland; but greatly to his regret at the time, though happily enough in the result, was too late to join the expedition either of Argyll or Monmouth. He introduced himself to the War Office at the Hague, and was admitted into the Dutch service. Martha, after many

difficulties which could scarcely have been surmounted but for the naïve and adventurous devices of Thomas Wilson, her fellow-fugitive of Glenvernoch, arrived in Edinburgh. Though there it was only like walking into the lion's mouth, yet the young lady and her attendant, under cover of a friendly house, succeeded in eluding all official observation. As soon as news arrived in Scotland of the landing of the Prince of Orange at Torbay, his triumphant progress to London, and the flight of James, Clavers and his brother, Lagg, Winram, *et hoc genus omne*, disappeared from Galloway like night-owls at the approach of day, while Sir Andrew Agnew, the hereditary Sheriff, and all the old authority of barons and freeholders came back, and rose into more vigour than when they had been rudely displaced. In these circumstances Martha returned

to Baldoon to resume a filial care of her father, and to be mistress of his house.

During his brief visit she conducted her lover more than once along the green and daisied meadows to the shelly sands where the two Margarets had died, and there shed bitter tears. While on their return they recounted their own trials and adventures, amid consoling glimpses of a future-wedded sunshine. Martha, on one of these occasions, told her now happy lover a striking dream she had on the night after her first visit to the death-scene of her two martyred friends—a dream which Martha had often to recite in after years, and always with some new touch of rapture, while it became more marked in popular tradition, as years rolled on, from the sudden and alarming death of Drummoral, the provost of Wigtown, attributed in the fashion of the times to his gross neglect of the

warning conveyed to him in this, and by curious coincidence in a similar dream of the daughter of Widow Lachlison.

The drowning at Wigtown moved so deeply the imagination of all immediately related to the victims, sleeping and waking, that the night-vision of Martha, when restored to her smooth pillow at Baldoon, but with heavy sorrows still weighing on her elastic spirit, may now be given in something like the following form:

Martha's Dream.

I dreamt I lay in grotto grim,
Tho' soft my couch, mine eyes were dim;
Lone, lone, I strain'd my sight to see
Some kindly form that known should be,
And to the silence bent mine ear
In list some voice to still my fear.
But as the flint when struck by steel—
Or levin-flash makes darkness reel—
Quick sparklets from mine eyeballs flew,
And lights and spectres brought to view.

In goblin dance and mystic flame
Wild atoms whirled without a name,
Of varied shape, in gleam and shade,
Until my sleep a dread was made.
The murd'rous scene where here we stand
Was pictured by the goblin band.
Mine ear, erst dull, sounds now did pierce ;
Shouts, laughter, shrieks, and thunder fierce ;
I tried to rise, to cry, to pray,
But torpor frigid on me lay.

One echo came mine ear to fill,
The dropping of a tinkling rill.
This "still small voice" spread silence round,
And lull'd me into sleep profound.

Anon, as borne on distant air,
Soft as the hymn of sea-shell fair—
Sweeter than Harp by zephyrs toned,
Than note of birds or human sound—
More liquid than the Tidal flow,
Far-reaching as the Sunny glow—
A murm'rous music woke my sense,
And bound my soul in list'ning trance.
No viols, lutes, or dulcimers,
E'er made by deft artificers,
Discoursed to such sweet ecstasy
As this celestial minstrelsy.
It rose like dew in tiny swells,
As one might hear from crystal bells

Waked by Fairies' touch or Spirit sweep,
And bounding fell in chorals deep
On measured wings and tread of feet,
From some far choir vast and meet ;
Where heavenly hosts in council sit,
And tune the spheres with music fit.

My rapture inward vision oped
And round my bright'ning couch I groped.
The grotto grim had fled away!
Before me shone the Milky Way ;
Above me sprang Heaven's vaulted Arch,
With countless orbs in stately march
'Neath concave lines of silver gray,
Where all the Rainbow's colours play.
While pathways wide in middle sky
Seemed paved with stones of glitt'ring dye.
Jasper, am'thyst, and ruby shine,
And diamonds with the ore combine
To lustre the immortal land,
The House of God not made with hand.
Far along the resplendent ways—
Far through the sounding Arch of praise—
Aurora, large and bright, appear'd ;
Of whitest cloud, in towers uprear'd,
Of light so full, and burnish'd spires,
They bore in pomp the solar fires !
In glory as this vision grew
Till all the heavens with life endue,

Still louder swell'd the music grave,
And sense of coming concourse gave.

Who is This ? drops the cloudy veil,
As if a loved friend to hail ;
With joy so great, with step so free,
And—hither comes to speak to me ?
Lo ! Martyr-Maid ! My Margaret brave !
In robe as when she dared the wave.
But ah ! that robe is now so white,
That azure band so pure and bright,
That myrtle wreath which decks her hair,
That golden harp so sweet and rare !

"O ! Death ! where is thy sting ?
O ! Grave ! thy victory ?"

Ere ceased the strain, another stood
By Margaret's side, both brave and good.
A laurel crown upon her head,
Out of the Book of Grace she read.
She waved the palm in her right hand,
And gave a martyr'd saint's command ;
With the kind sense and sterling aims
That mark below our Scotia's dames.

"Hold fast, my child ! Be of good cheer ! The heavenly world
In love abounds. All evil deeds are blotted out.

But, tell Drummoral to beware of coming woe,
To sin no more, and cease to be his own worst foe."

A troop of Spirits gather'd round,
And Song from thousand harps was wound.
Methought I saw some Angel-wings,
And Face of Him who healing brings!
With joy and wild'ring awe unspoke
A leaping heart my slumber broke.

The few hours which the young but war-borne soldier could spend, in this short furlough, with his beloved and devoted Martha, loaded though they were with doleful remembrances and with a still uncertain future, flew past on golden wings. Hay was in time to rejoin the standard of King William at Carrickfergus, led his company gallantly through the waters of the Boyne, and distinguished himself among the bravest of the brave in that decisive battle. Promotion followed rapidly on the steps of Hay, though the King

would never allow him to be transferred from his Dutch guards; and, in the first lull of civil war, Martha and he were joined in wedlock as they had long been joined, through many trials and undeviating constancy, in heart. Their nuptials were one of many signs of a happier time in their native province, and were celebrated by both gentle and simple. But they had also the singular good fortune of being blessed by Sir David and the old lady of Arioland—the one a complier, to a certain length, through the crushing pressure of heavy fines and still heavier threats, with the despotic edicts of the Government; and the other so fearless a defier of all restraints on her religious and maternal duties that she had only escaped by a hair's-breadth the most fearful degradation which could befall a grey-haired woman of rank and independence—yet both alike

happy on this occasion, and glad to see the true love and gladness of their offspring, though their own eyes were ready to close on all sublunary scenes.

The son of Glenvernoch refused, despite the earnest entreaties of his lady Martha, to return with her to Galloway. The fate of his sister had filled the spirit of the youth with bitterness to the scenes of so fell a tragedy; and the condition of his father and mother, whom he felt as if he could neither comfort nor relieve, only added to his repugnance. He preferred to join the levies in defence of the Revolution to which the Scottish youth were now flocking, fought in the Continental campaigns of King William; and rested for some time after long war in the quiet garrison duty of Edinburgh Castle. He proved himself a brave, prudent and hardy soldier; and when his period of service had

expired, was so well furnished and disposed as to step of his own ability into the shoes of his father at Glenvernoch, and commence the arduous career of a hill-farmer—affording the last worldly consolation to his bowed and stricken parents, who had never recovered the merciless spoliation of heart and substance to which they had been subjected.

The Bailie of Wigtown, who has figured so often in these pages, had the bitter mortification of finding himself discarded both by Church and State, as well as by his neighbours; while his superior in the magistracy, Coltran of Drummoral, though bereft of the last shred of political importance, had no difficulty as a man of property, and through several Parliaments member for the borough, in keeping himself in tolerable odour with the ecclesiastical power, whether Episcopal or Presby-

terian, and in having always admirers to sit down at his well-plenished dinner-table. How far this difference of fortune arose from the art of the chief magistrate in throwing all the dirty work of his office on the too zealous acting deputy may be left to a plain imagination. But the situation to which the Bailie came was most pitiable. He was quickly impoverished, and scarce any one would recognize or speak to him beyond the walls of his son's house. He had entered, contrary to early instruction, into the vein of Claverhouse with all the mock spirit of a cavalier; and when the flimsy fabric of his immorally excited brain broke down, he became a victim of the most abject religious fear. Twenty years after the event he sat on the cutty-stool before the kirk-session, Coltran being one of his judges, and made confession and repentance in the grief of his heart that

"he should have sitten on the siese of these women sentenced to die in this place in the year 1685," begging to be forgiven and admitted to the privilege of the Sacrament. The privilege was granted, and may be hoped to have increased the limited social enjoyment of his last few days, and finally the peace of his death-bed.

The Bailie's aspiring and contemptuous ally, Tam Picardy, had a much worse ending, though he was, it may be, not so entirely bad a character. His betrayal of the daughter of Glenvernoch, with its immediately-related incident of the apprehension of the good old widow Lachlison, gradually spread abroad, and not only destroyed his whilom prosperous business as a cattle-dealer, but cut him off from all social sympathy. His treachery appeared in the public eye to be simply a wanton

and heartless act of utter wickedness. His infatuated love for Martha was suspected only by a very few—known only by one especially, his truest friend, who was no more a living witness; while the phantasmagory of ambition in which he had nursed this hopeless passion was known only to himself. His own remorse from the day of the drowning was deep and irrecoverable. Though he took to himself a wife of humble rank, he gradually lost his reason; became insane; and one of the features of his insanity was that he fancied himself to be "Allan Peerie"—clothed himself as Allan had in the high days of Claverhouse, and went about the country sad, desolate, and mendicant, in hideous mimicry of what had been itself a mime. When questioned in his more lucid moments he said he was the spirit of a man whom he had murdered. Among the "naturals" in

Galloway since that period several have been known under the name of "Allan Peerie;" and the popular tradition, like many others connected with the drownings, and now rapidly dying out, was that, when the origin of these "Peeries" were inquired into, they had always been found to be of the lineage of Picardy.

THE END.

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